

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH:  
TOWARDS AN ALTERNATIVE PARADIGM**

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**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**Languages in Education  
University of London Institute of Education**

**June 1999**



*To my son Nayeem*

*For the times not shared*

*And the stresses not spared*

# **ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH: TOWARDS AN ALTERNATIVE PARADIGM**

## **ABSTRACT**

In this thesis I examine the issue of linking teachers' implicit beliefs to teacher education. This is based on the assumption that teachers' own conceptualisations have a crucial function in curriculum implementation. As the training programme for secondary school teachers of English in Bangladesh fulfils an in-service function with 80% course participants on a year's secondment, I propose that teachers' instructional behaviour needs to be understood through their beliefs and within the specific context in which they operate.

An important purpose of teacher education then has to enable teachers to clarify their prior perceptions, elaborate and develop their current schema about learning and teaching and finds ways of linking them to available theories. I maintain that programmes developed on the principles of current educational aims, however worthwhile, remain marginal unless teachers' psychological and ecological contexts are taken into account. With Bangladesh envisaging developing ELT in secondary schools, a reflexive process between personal theory and classroom action needs to be seen as being at the heart of curriculum change.

I therefore, develop a framework of second language teacher education based on current literature and within this framework I investigate the assumptions underlying a recently revised English teacher-education programme in Bangladesh. An ethnographic approach is then advanced in regarding the classroom as a specific cultural entity where teacher perspectives are analysed. The belief system of a cohort of student-teachers on the training course is also investigated and the findings from the two groups are compared. Finally, I integrate my hypothesis of recognising teacher perspectives (supported by the study findings) into a conceptual paradigm for educating secondary school English teachers. In so doing, I emphasise—in line with curriculum design theory—the importance of framing design solutions to suit specific contexts.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Undertaking doctoral studies is an odyssey which is almost impossible without support from a variety of sources. I am indebted to so many that it would be impossible to name everyone. Nevertheless, my deepest acknowledgements go out to:

### *The Institutions*

- ◆ The TCTD programme and the British Council for financial and operational support.
- ◆ The University of Dhaka for granting me study leave.
- ◆ The University of London Institute of Education and the Languages in Education Academic Group for providing an intellectually conducive atmosphere.

### *The Academics*

- ◆ My earlier supervisor Professor Henry Widdowson for his exceptional qualities both as an academic and an individual. His regard for diverse opinions and disparate contexts allowed me the freedom to work with my own ideas and at my own pace.
- ◆ Dr Rob Batstone for his insightful comments, his encouragement and overall support during the final stages of my research, and in particular, his faith and confidence in my ability to bring this work to fruition.

### *The Participants*

- ◆ The teacher trainers at the Dhaka Teacher Training College, particularly Suraiya Huda for facilitating my work there.
- ◆ My University colleagues, the NCTB specialists and textbook writers in Bangladesh for sharing their professional ideas and providing me with relevant materials.
- ◆ The principals of the 14 schools who kindly allowed me to intrude into their establishments.
- ◆ The secondary school teachers who let me sit in on their lessons and later shared their perspectives on English teaching with me.
- ◆ The trainee teachers at Dhaka TTC who enthusiastically took part in my study.

### *Family and Friends*

- ◆ My husband Mahbub to whom I am particularly grateful. His patience, consideration, co-operation and support during this long and difficult period have been remarkable.
- ◆ My young son Nayeem who has had to endure disruptions in life and schooling.
- ◆ My extended family Samia, Junaid, Naveed and Zara whose deep affection and caring warmth from different parts of the world have been a source of strength. My special thanks to Naveed for his painstaking cross-checking of my bibliography through e-mail.
- ◆ My dear friends Shaheen and Alan Westcombe for their caring support all through.
- ◆ My very special friend Elizabeth Marden for her exceptional kindness and generosity.
- ◆ Last but not the least, my fellow researchers – Nahil, Smiljka, Felicity, Baiduriah, and a host of others who supported me in various ways and with whom I shared ideas, friendship or simply a good laugh. Without them, life in front of a computer would have been intolerable.

And finally, any inadequacies in this work are mine and mine alone. I accept them with all humility.

Arifa Rahman  
June 1999

## ABBREVIATIONS

BANBEIS	Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
B.ELT.	Bachelor in English Language Teaching
BOU	Bangladesh Open University
CLT	Communicative language teaching
DFID	Department for International Development (formerly ODA)
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EFLTE	English as a Foreign Language Teacher Education
EFT	<i>English for Today</i> textbooks
EL	English language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ELTIP	English Language Teaching Improvement Project
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESLTE	English as a Second Language Teacher Education
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
HSC	Higher Secondary Certificate
IATEFL	International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language
IELTS	International English Language Testing Service
IER	Institute of Education and Research
NCSC	National Curriculum and Syllabus Committee
NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
ODA	Overseas Development Agency (renamed DFID in 1997)
OTEFL	Orientation for secondary school teachers of English as a foreign language
SAVE	South Asian Variety of English
SCED	Secondary Science Education Project
SLTE	Second Language Teacher Education
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
TEFL	Teaching of English as a Foreign Language
TTC	Teacher Training College
UGC	University Grants Commission

## INTRODUCTION

*Teachers don't merely deliver the curriculum. They develop, define it and reinterpret it too. It is what teachers think, what teachers believe and what teachers do at the level of the classroom that ultimately shapes the kind of learning that young people get. Growing appreciation of this fact is placing working with teachers and understanding teaching at the top of our research and improvement agendas.*

(Hargreaves and Fullan 1992: ix)

### 1. The basic assumption

In recent years a general sense of the recognition of the *teacher* as being at the heart of the educational process has been emerging. The greater the importance attached to education as a whole—whether for cultural transmission, for social cohesion and justice, or for the human resource development so critical in modern, technology-based economies—the higher is the priority that needs to be accorded to the teachers responsible for that education. Teachers are being seen as the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement. Proposals made at the macro-level of educational policy depend for their effectiveness on the interpretation by teachers at the micro-level of pedagogic practice and on their abilities to understand and carry out these proposals. Furthermore, due to demographic imperatives, there are indications of a strong demand for qualified professionals to staff classrooms well into the future. By the same token, it is reasonable to argue that the need for an effective provision to initiate, develop and sustain teachers through an appropriate process of education consequently should be amongst the highest priorities of educational planning.

### 2. The aim of the study

This universal focus on the development of the teacher has had repercussions on developing countries around the world. In Bangladesh, in addition to a range of steps towards educational change, a curriculum revision project started in 1990 has taken up a scheme to revise English language teaching in secondary schools. It has involved:

- ◆ a revision of ELT textbooks towards a communicative approach
- ◆ an orientation of English teachers in the use of the revised textbooks

♦ a curriculum revision of the English component in the state-run teacher training colleges.

In view of the teacher being at the heart of the pedagogic process and the fact that the teacher training course fulfils an in-service function with around 80% course participants on a year's secondment from their respective schools, the aim of my study has been primarily to focus on the third objective above i.e. to investigate how far the assumptions and principles underlying the revised curriculum of the training programme address the prior perceptions of trainee-teachers of English. In order to do so I examine current theoretical approaches to second language teacher education and investigate their relevance to the context in Bangladesh. Widdowson (1989: 128) asserts, "The influence of ideas...depends upon them being recast in different terms to suit other conditions of relevance.... so that they key in with one's frame of reference". My study aims at doing just that.

### **3. The background to the study**

The context, purpose and motivation for my study can be traced to my experience both as an English language teacher and teacher trainer. At the Institute of Modern Languages which offers language support courses for Dhaka University students, I have been increasingly concerned with poor standards of English among students at the tertiary level. As a language tutor, I have had to resort to a largely remedial nature of teaching, without much success. This general language failure among students points to a number of factors but more conspicuously towards direct classroom influences while still at school. My additional experience as a teacher trainer on in-service courses has made me aware of a number of issues. In particular I have found myself recognising a number of attitudes that English teachers appear to display and therefore I became interested in investigating teachers' viewpoints, especially in terms of their relationship, if any, to the teacher education phenomenon. This reflects the assumption that the need for research arises out of a sensitivity towards issues emerging from the immediate context of a pedagogic situation. As Lorenz (1971 cited in van Lier 1988) claims, there are two main reasons for engaging in research – wanting to know and wanting to help. My primary reason is the former and through it the latter.



#### **4. The significance of the study**

Although there is a fair amount of general educational research in the country, there is very little work on ELT. Most information at present springs from consultancy reports, feasibility studies, official documents and a handful of expository papers and articles. As a result, there may be too much speculation and too little awareness of deeper and more critical issues. This has led sometimes to myths being perpetrated and occasionally dogmas to be imported into the ELT field in Bangladesh. This study therefore is significant in making a contribution to this rather meagre stock of knowledge, particularly in the field of second language teacher education. Furthermore, as the nature of my investigation is heuristic rather than evaluative, exploring teacher perceptions within a specific educational context, it is hoped that it will promote awareness towards a recognition of the significance of the role that teachers' belief systems play within classroom processes. Indeed more studies on different aspects of teacher thinking and decision-making (as well as other features relating to ELT) might contribute to a better understanding of how English language teachers think and operate pedagogically. This could in turn facilitate an informed addressing of a range of issues raised by current attempts at ELT reforms at all levels of the education system.

#### **5. The research questions**

As the focus of my study is the recently revised English programme of the B.Ed course at state teacher training colleges and its relevance to the issue of engaging with teachers' perceptions and beliefs about learning and teaching English, my first research question is:

◆ What are the assumptions and principles that underlie the theoretical framework of the English programme of the course?

Then to enable me to draw the relevance of this course to teacher beliefs, my next set of questions is:

◆ How do classroom practices reflect teachers' current beliefs and attitudes towards English learning and teaching in secondary schools?

◆ How do teachers themselves articulate these beliefs?

◆ What beliefs do trainee-teachers (who are also practising teachers) bring to the course?

## **6. The hypothesis**

It has been noted in educational research, particularly in teacher cognition and socialisation studies, that teachers, in spite of training, revert to old habits when placed in familiar settings and that teaching practices have shown a dependence on an intuitive form of teaching knowledge. There is no special reason to believe that our local English teachers should behave any differently. Working, firstly, on the premise that English language teachers in secondary schools in Bangladesh operate under a personal belief system constructed through experience, tradition and socialisation, and secondly, on the principle that current educational views emphasise teachers' cognitive and contextual roles, I argue that teacher education programmes need to draw out teacher beliefs, interact with them and use them as an anchor to develop a teaching philosophy on which subsequent links can be made with the received knowledge provided in formal courses. My thesis thus explores a possibility of linking theory and practice in the EFL teacher's psyche.

## **7. The study**

The research has two aspects. First it examines the theoretical assumptions and principles that underpin the current English component of the training course and second, it takes an empirical look at teachers' perceptions and beliefs about learning and teaching English in order to link the findings into the assumptions underpinning the training programme. Thus I analyse the training course in terms of a theoretical framework drawn from current teacher education models and, in order to investigate its relevance within the context of Bangladesh, I undertake an ethnographic study with regard to teacher perceptions and beliefs. Taking two sets of teachers, a practising group and a trainee group, I investigate the classroom practices and the underlying decision-making rationalisation of the first group and compare them with the attitudes and perceptions of the second. Besides analysing curricula documents for the first part of my study, I use in the second part three techniques of collecting primary data: classroom observations, questionnaires and interviews. Besides, I explore a range of publications, reports and documents to obtain secondary data.

## **8. The findings**

There are indications that the theoretical principles underlying the revised teacher training programme supports in some ways the reflective approach that is currently in vogue in teacher development. However, the findings from the study of teachers' beliefs clearly show that theory is merely 'espoused' and trainee-teachers are not influenced by what they receive on their course but actually follow their own prior perceptions just as their more experienced colleagues do. It is obvious that like many ELT reforms worldwide, the English programme, though valuable in principle, is failing in practice to achieve its objectives. The findings of the study thus support the hypothesis I started out with – that, as teachers operate under a personal belief system, education (as devised by the new course) will have no bearing unless educators take this factor seriously into account.

## **9. My proposal**

Working within a psychological and contextual framework, I propose that the teacher-educator's role is to engage actively and positively with the personal belief systems of student-teachers and help them to elaborate and develop their perspectives. Educators therefore need to devise ways of facilitating an enhanced ability in trainees to mediate between their thought processes, experiential knowledge, recognised wisdom and the specificities of individual contexts. This may possibly encourage a genuine link between theory and practice, a link that has substantive coherence for the practitioner as it develops from his/her own perceptions of pedagogic values. Based on this argument, and drawing on current trends in teacher development, I attempt to reformulate a conceptual framework for English language teacher education which might address the issue of teacher perceptions in an appropriate manner.

## **10. Summary of chapters**

After the *first chapter* outlines the background of English language learning and teaching in Bangladesh in its historical, political, educational and socio-cultural setting, in *chapters 2 and 3*, I survey the literature for theories and issues that have contributed to the current discourse of second language teacher education. Although it is found that the knowledge base to date is inconclusive and therefore unable to offer an adequate

theory of teacher education, the favoured trend appears to be based on the holistic principles of education and on rejecting a skills-based training orientation. I point out that in the light of what has been established in chapter 1 (and later substantiated in chapters 4 and 6), this model might be inappropriate in a culture which might prefer to work in more conservative and conformist ways. In *chapter 4*, I examine the recently revised English curriculum of a specific teacher education course. A theoretical investigation of the assumptions and principles show that although there is some loyalty towards the current reflective approach in teacher education, the overall ethos of the programme is biased towards an applied science approach. The next phase is the empirical work I undertake to investigate teacher perceptions and beliefs in order to relate their relevance to teacher education. In *chapter 5*, I describe the approach, design and methodology of my study and rationalise the procedures used for collecting and analysing data. In *chapter 6*, I present the study findings on the beliefs and attitudes that underlie classroom teaching processes of two groups of secondary school English teachers—the first (trained and untrained) with a substantial amount of teaching experience and the second, a cohort of in-service trainee-teachers towards the end of their formal course. The findings point to an absence of any significant difference in the perceptions of the two groups. The *final chapter* connects the research results to my hypothesis of drawing on teacher beliefs and using them as an anchor to develop a teaching philosophy during the training stage. I therefore work towards a reinterpretation of the current approach to teacher education, formulating a set of principles and procedures that might be more operational in a setting like Bangladesh.

## CHAPTER 1

### Setting the scene: ELT in Bangladesh

#### 1. Introduction

The need for an effective provision to initiate, develop and sustain teachers through an appropriate process of education is gradually being accepted as amongst the highest priorities of educational planning. This awareness is being reflected in general educational practice. In the domain of English language teaching, too, the recognition of the teacher as being central to the pedagogic process, has prompted investigations into the assumptions, principles and practices that are needed for an efficient language teacher education scheme (see Britten 1985, Freeman 1989, Richards and Nunan 1990, Widdowson 1990, Wallace 1991, Gebhard 1991, Freeman and Richards 1993, 1996, Larsen-Freeman 1990, 1995, Ur 1996, Richards 1998).

This universal focus on the development of the teacher has had repercussions on the developing world. In spite of constraints on resources, there are attempts to increase expenditure on education (UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO Report 1993) and several countries have embarked on their own agendas of curriculum reform and improvement of teacher training provisions<sup>1</sup> as a prerequisite to human development and economic growth. Individual governments, international agencies and non-government organisations are investing increasingly large amounts in the expansion and improvement of educational institutions (Gustavsson 1990). This is particularly true in the area of English language teaching in secondary schools in Bangladesh.

This introductory chapter proposes to establish the context, which in turn will set the conditions and relevance of my investigation of teacher perceptions of language learning and teaching as manifest in secondary school classrooms and the link that may be usefully drawn to the education provisions of secondary school teachers of English

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<sup>1</sup>I use the words *teacher training* and *teacher education* in free variation throughout this study, to describe any formal programme of education for teachers. In chapters 2 and 3, however, I have argued for a holistic *educational perspective* in place of the atomistic *training orientation*. The terms used there have a specific connotation which should be obvious to the reader.

in Bangladesh. Section 1 provides a brief historical background of the English language in the Indian subcontinent and then moves on to unpack current attitudes towards English and its status as an additional language. Section 2 examines the state's English language policy and its place in the curriculum as well as recent attempts at English language teaching (ELT) reform. Finally, section 3 strives to place in context the phenomenon of ELT within the secondary school by analysing the wider educational structure and the general teaching-learning ethos.

## **1.1 Background**

Situated in the delta of the Ganges-Brahmaputra rivers east of South Asia, Bangladesh, seceding from Pakistan in 1971, is a relatively new state. However, its geo-political history as part of the Indian subcontinent stretches back through 600 years of Muslim rule before the British extended its colonial domination, through the East India Company, to Bengal<sup>2</sup>. Hence its legacy of the English language is identical with the 200-year history of colonial English in India until 1947. Predominantly an agricultural country, Bangladesh, with an area the size of England and Wales combined, but with a population of 124.3 million (SVR, BDS 1997 cited in BANBEIS 1998) has been bracketed among nine high-population developing countries by the United Nations in its 'Declaration on Education for All' (UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO Report 1993). The country has an urban population figure of only 23% and a literacy rate of 44.8% (BBS 1996). It is important to keep this demographic perspective in mind whilst discussing the educational opportunities and the implementational infrastructure for English language teaching and teacher education programmes provided by the system.

### **1.1.1 The issue of a national language**

In the post-war era, when most colonised countries throughout the world attained independence, one of the first steps was the selection of an indigenous language to be the basis for a national and later official language of government, education and other "controlling domains" (Sibayan 1989). This period saw governments embarking on

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<sup>2</sup> *Bengal* is the historical name (used even today) which geographically includes Bangladesh as well as West Bengal (currently in Eastern India).

conscious acts of language planning (Rubin and Jernudd 1971) and it was no easy task. Multi-lingual realities often presented problems which were not always satisfactorily resolved as in the case of the Philippines (Gonzalez 1992). Various solutions to the dilemma of national language selection and development were sought (see Lambert 1994). Examples may be drawn from ‘the three-language formula’ in India (Hindi as national language, one state language, and English as the lingua franca), or the selection of all major competing languages as official languages, as in Switzerland, or even the selection of the colonial language in the absence of any important ethnic group to constitute a majority, as with the Portuguese language in Brazil.

Fortunately Bangladesh did not face this problem of language selection due to the existence of a single language, Bengali,<sup>3</sup> strongly ensconced both in its spoken and written forms among the great majority of its population. Indeed, the very birth of Bangladesh emanated from the issue of language rights (see Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson 1989) which remained a contentious issue all through its former existence as East Pakistan (1947-1971). Pakistan had been carved out of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 and divided into two parts, East and West (separated by 1200 miles of Indian territory). The state language selected arbitrarily for the whole country was Urdu, the indigenous language of the dominant group of the west, with English acting as the official second language.

Kachru (1983) states that language planning and the role and status of English was not much different in India, Pakistan, Nepal and Srilanka after independence. But it may be pointed out that though India and Pakistan were multilingual and required English as a link language and emphasised the need for a state language (Hindi for India and Urdu for Pakistan), monolingual East Pakistan did not need Urdu or, for that matter, English. The Bengali-speaking East Pakistanis resented this imposition. It was, to use Kramsch’s (1998) words, a case of the “totemization” of one language and a “stigmatization” of the other. The Bengalis opposed it vehemently (Musa 1985), leading to blood being spilled in 1952. The incident spearheaded the Language

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<sup>3</sup> The Bengali language traces its origin to twelfth century Prakrit, a derivative of Sanskrit and has an ancient written literature and a long literary tradition. The Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature for his anthology of Bengali poems *Gitanjali* in 1913.

Movement which gained momentum by challenging, in addition, a variety of repressive measures meted out by the west. This grew into a powerful political, cultural and economic lobby that subsequently led to the secessionist achievement in 1971.

With independence, the choice of a national language was a simple formality. Bengali today is the language of 95 % of the entire population (BANBEIS 1998). However, it may be added there are several minority tribes with their own languages mostly in an oral tradition (Haque 1995). Therefore although officially depicted as a monolingual and homogenous society, Bangladesh does face the issue of minority 'language rights' particularly from the Chakma tribal people who also claim a written script (though not widely used). There are several dialects too, spoken at local levels and are all variations of the standard Bengali language. These dialects are what Gumperz and Naim (1960: 9) call a "chain of mutually intelligible varieties", making no socio-cultural claims over standard Bengali. Indeed parents of dialect-speaking children expect them to learn the standard form in school. Among the majority Muslim population (87%, British Council Bangladesh Website), there is also an oral tradition of Koranic Arabic for use in religious rituals. But for all practical purposes, Bengali is the language of communication, of functional literacy, of general, specialised and higher education, of government and the administration, the media and the publishing world as well as of business, entertainment and the creative arts.

### **1.1.2 The history of English in the region**

English has had a total existence of more than 160 years in the Indian Subcontinent (the collective geographical name given to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh). Now, half a century after the British have left, English appears to be very much in use in the overall bilingual and multilingual set-up of this entire region (Baumgardner 1996). But before discussing the present status of the language, I provide a brief background.

#### **1.1.2.1 English in the colonial era (1835-1947)**

Historically there were three imperialist languages of power in Bengal – Persian which came with the Turks and the Moghuls in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Portuguese brought in by the first European traders in the fifteenth century and English which



came to the Indian subcontinent with the British merchants in the early seventeenth century. At the turn of the eighteenth century, the uses of Persian and Portuguese were beginning to decline and English just beginning to appear. Previously Persian had been the court language, the official language for government and the law courts and the preferred language of educated Muslims and upwardly mobile Hindus. The British officials of the East India Company had to use Persian interpreters (Ferguson 1996). Portuguese in a pidginised form was used as a lingua franca between Europeans and the local people. Persian, Arabic or Sanskrit were used in schools though the educational use of Bengali, the mother tongue of the overwhelming majority, was not favoured. As a result of sweeping military victories by the East India Company and backed by charters from the British government, British presence in Bengal strengthened.

Interest in English began to grow and some studied it privately (Sinha 1978). Officially institutionalised in 1835 through the much-discussed Minute of Lord Macaulay,<sup>4</sup> English had by 1840 replaced Persian in the high courts and government offices. At the beginning, English was taught only to a selected few, “a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect”(sic) envisaged by Macaulay (1835 cited in Aggarwal 1993: 54) who could help the colonial masters rule this vast country. Previous to that, British missionaries and some early administrators had considered an English education to be a desirable vehicle for bringing ‘spiritual, moral and religious enlightenment’ (sic) to the masses and had taken steps towards that goal. Sinha (1978) chronicles the entrepreneurial ventures of British individuals in the late eighteenth century who set up private English medium schools in Calcutta, the capital of the region. Though most of these schools did not survive their founders, a few went on to become prestigious institutions.

At the same time, in spite of the Anglicist-Orientalist controversy (see Sinha 1978, Said 1993, Pennycook 1994a) over the use of vernacular education, a number of Indians themselves demanded western learning, through English, to introduce the scientific and philosophical enlightenment of the west into India (Raja Ram Mohan Roy’s Address to William Pitt, 1823 cited in Aggarwal 1993). This petition can be seen as the first formal plea for English from the local community on grounds of “instrumental motivation”

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<sup>4</sup> Macaulay’s Minute of 1835 laid the foundations of the British policy on education in India.

(Gardner and Lambert 1972)<sup>5</sup>. Kachru (1988) has called this “a credo of creativity”. 175 years on, this rationale is still alive, perhaps in a stronger form. Mazumdar (1960: 23) says, “English education was introduced into this country, not *by* the British government but *in spite of* them”. By the early nineteenth century, English had started to play an active role and had become the dominant language of higher education in Calcutta though Bengali was still used in some government offices, the lower courts, in primary education and by the media. Interestingly, the first literary work in English was by a Bengali named Lal Behari Dey.

By the early twentieth century, alongside the vernaculars, English was introduced in secondary schools<sup>6</sup>. One trend which the British started in India, with perhaps a lasting effect on the socio-economic fabric, is the English medium private school—a facile imitation of the British public school (see Singh 1989 for an account of the Chiefs’ colleges and the Nobles’ schools established then). The impact of the exclusive nature of these schools operating through the English medium may have created the class stratification of access to English evident today<sup>7</sup>. In the twenties and thirties, a wave of nationalism and non-co-operation led by Mahatma Gandhi marginalised English for a time and saw the establishment of several local educational institutions all over India but this was short-lived as people soon flocked back to English-medium institutions. Indeed, in the days preceding independence, English was used as a tool of resistance to voice the legitimate claims of the oppressed in a language that the oppressor could understand and it is ironic that many of the nationalist leaders were products of the private English-medium school system themselves (R. Bailey 1996, Kumar 1997).

### **1.1.2.2 English during the East Pakistan period (1947-1971)**

In post-colonial 1947, English emerged as the *de facto* official language in spite of the Pakistan government declaration that Urdu would be the national language (see section

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<sup>5</sup> Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) define *instrumental motivation* as the force that encourages the exploitation of the target language as a tool for gaining access to material benefits or opportunities which cannot normally be obtained through the use of the first language.

<sup>6</sup> English teaching in secondary schools was obviously not a success even then, evident from West’s (1926) comments on bilingualism in Bengal and the teaching of English in difficult situations.

<sup>7</sup> Whether English is the cause of class stratification or a tool for maintaining and widening already existing social stratification needs to be examined.

1.1.1). The constitution was written in English. Many of the political leaders who had led the struggle for independence and were themselves products of colonial education, did not operate well in their native tongues. English therefore continued to be used as the language of administration, the legal profession, higher education and social mobility, as well as of fresh political resistance, now aimed against West Pakistan. English was present in the school curriculum from year 3 and the school leaving examinations, both secondary and higher secondary, were held through the medium of English. Many leading newspapers and magazines used English although there was an impressive array of newspapers and a wide range of creative writing in Bengali. But on the whole, Bengali was viewed with suspicion by the establishment as it was seen as assimilating and spreading harmful influences from India and Hinduism.

#### **1.1.2.3 English in Bangladesh (the first decade)**

Secession from Pakistan in 1971 ushered in a wave of nationalism which not only threw out Urdu but also displaced English, resulting in Bengali (the first language) taking precedence at all levels of the bureaucracy, education, administration and later on, the judiciary (Moniruzzaman 1979). The Constitution, written in Bengali, declared that the state language would be Bengali (Part 1, Article 3). Later, and as recently as in 1987, the *Bangla Procholon Ain* (Bengali Implementation Act) was passed to enforce the use of the language particularly in the state sector (as it was evident that some government officials were still using English). There was, however, no mention regarding the status of English.

To assert Bengali identity, English was abolished from the primary stage and withdrawn from the tertiary level in 1972 but it remained a compulsory subject in the secondary curriculum. Bengali became the medium of instruction in all schools. At tertiary level, all lectures were attempted in Bengali though there was no accompanying concerted effort for vernacular books or translations (Islam 1975). This created immense difficulties particularly in science, medicine and engineering faculties. Thus policy dictates and nationalist fervour relegated English very rapidly from the status of a second language (ESL) to that of a foreign language (EFL). It may be pointed out here that although I use these two terms (EFL/ESL) as commonly understood—ESL having a functional use in the community and EFL more constrained and generally

restricted to the classroom—I agree with Greenbaum (1996: 241) when he claims that the neatness of the division into first, second and foreign languages “masks the untidiness in the real world”.

Thus language policy, clearly favouring the mother tongue, did not offer any directives for English which had held powerful sway in previous decades (Sultana and Hoque 1995). Most importantly there was no articulated policy for steps needed during the transition phase. Attention may be drawn to Moag’s (1983) claim that the final stage of the life-cycle of non-native Englishes comes when English is replaced by a conscious act of language planning with an indigenous language as the medium of education. This appears to be a reductionist view, as it fails to take into consideration a multiplicity of factors. Though Moag claims the ultimate demise of English in such situations, he could not be further from the truth in the case of Bangladesh (and other countries in this region), where English continued to survive like a smouldering fire. As Kachru (1996: 20) has aptly described it, English in Bangladesh, like other countries of this region, “seems to be experiencing life after near-death”.

Perhaps because this transition phase was not carefully discussed, planned or organised, English began to make its presence felt. Although all English medium schools were ordered to switch to Bengali, some private schools quietly continued to teach English and had long waiting lists for school places. In 1976-77, English was partially reinstated as a subject in the primary curriculum from year 3. Thus during the first decade, like its neighbours Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal, Bangladesh felt the political need to discourage English amongst the masses and promote the national language. At the same time, it covertly provided opportunities for a small elite to develop and continue to be fluent in the language. As I have stated elsewhere (Rahman 1988), English during this period survived in two forms – a sterile but compulsory presence in the school curriculum and a covert but robust form through the surreptitious patronage of an elitist minority.

A word in terms of the vernacular as the medium of instruction is in order here. The decision to provide education in the Bengali medium was clearly an appropriate move as global policy supported by the UNESCO (1953) encourages mother tongue or vernacular education especially in the early years. When the need for English was

revived in the country, a sensible policy would have been to tackle it at the secondary level. This would have had two clear benefits. Firstly, scarce resources could have been diverted to developing a relatively better English language programme at the secondary stage. Secondly, it would have prevented a vast number of poorly trained teachers with inadequate competence in English from laying deeply ingrained faulty foundations at the primary stage (see Rahman 1991 for a discussion of the need for remedial English among Dhaka University students).

Dove (1983) maintains children who already find school difficult, fail in the huge task of learning a second language early in their school careers due primarily to inferior teaching. In such circumstances, when English was re-introduced into the primary school curriculum a few years later, only the most advantaged children benefited. Dove further argues that a sound policy for mass education should provide adequate resources for real improvements in the teaching of the vernacular in primary schools while intensive English courses for those students who turn out to need another language can be introduced at a comparatively low cost at much higher levels of the system. She additionally uses the cost-effectiveness argument against providing English for the poorer section of Bangladeshi society who would only spend a few years in school before dropping out mostly for economic reasons. Dove likewise makes a rather dubious claim that the poorer groups would never need an international language for the type of work they could expect to do, and therefore there were advantages in diverting their time into more useful avenues in the mother tongue. From the perspective of critical theory, such a statement is indeed deterministic.

### **1.1.3 The current status of English**

A decade on, a general sense of dissatisfaction over poor linguistic standards in schools and in professions began to be voiced (see section 1.2.3 for the various reports on the declining standards of English). Like Pakistan and Sri Lanka, English saw a gradually increased role particularly in business, trade and the private sector, and steps were subsequently taken to emphasise the teaching of English at all levels. This is reminiscent of Michael West's argument of the instrumental function of the English language in Bengal in 1926 and a century preceding that, Raja Ram Mohan Roy's plea for English education in India in 1823. Even politicians who actively campaigned for

the use of the mother tongue in all spheres of life (but privately sent their own children to English-medium schools at home or preferably abroad), appeared confident enough to come forth with public comments about the falling standards of English in education albeit taking care not to undermine Bengali in any way.

Thus older nationalist arguments and anxieties about a colonial liability have become muted by the recent realisation that English may be a modern-day asset (Ferguson 1996) primarily due to its “vehicular load” (Quirk et al. 1972: 2). Evidence in support of this ‘vehicular load’ is usually demonstrated in the use of English in science, technology<sup>8</sup>, and development as well as in the humanities. In particular it is viewed as a vehicle for the acquisition of the various spheres of knowledge which Kachru (1986b) has distinguished as one of the factors that have historically facilitated it in acquiring its powerful status. In Bangladesh, English is seen as the key to higher studies and training abroad and even the best of brains have to go through the rigours of a language proficiency test such as the IELTS before being accepted for higher courses overseas. At present, due to poor standards, a large sum of aid money earmarked for higher training is spent on in-country and host-country English language support programmes before study fellows can embark on their actual training. For example, 42 doctors up for fellowship in 1993/94 got an average score of 4.65 on the IELTS scores against a minimal requirement of 6.5/7.0, and of them, 24 had scores of 4.5 or less, according to a British Council TCTD programme source.

The prominence of English is further projected in maritime and air transport; diplomacy, the multinational manufacture and distribution of goods and services; trade and banking; the digital revolution with its computer data-bases, high-level programming languages and the proliferation of the information superhighway via the internet; broadcasting, satellite telecasting, international sport, as well as the Anglophone pop music scene and pop culture. (Kachru 1986b: 129) considers this broad use of English as “indeed unprecedented for a human language .... and therein lies its strength as an international language” Most scholastic studies and popular journalism today accept unquestioningly that English is (or is poised to be) a universal

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<sup>8</sup> Ferguson (1996) claims approximately 80% of all world-wide publications in science and technology are in English as is most of the information stored in computer data banks.

world language with no other language in serious competition, something that “only a cultural cataclysm plus an abyss of much more than 20 years in width could seriously hamper” (Crystal 1995: 112).

This realisation has caused English to acquire significant roles after various phases of declining importance. By 1986 the government saw fit to introduce English right from the first year of primary school and in the last two years has reintroduced it into the undergraduate level. The result, of course, has been the lengthening of the time of exposure for learning English (14 years at present) – an emphasis, sadly, on quantity rather than on quality. The private sector too has responded vigorously. The mushrooming of private English medium kindergarten and primary schools and adult English language centres are evidence of the heavy demand among the population (Rahman 1991, Tickoo 1993)<sup>9</sup>. Indeed, the addition, within the last few years, of 16 *English medium* private universities to the 11 existing ones (which function in Bengali), is a significant development in terms of the status of the English language.

In addition, a world-wide trend towards open market economies, coupled with the impact of new technologies, is creating major changes in patterns of employment. It has resulted in not only widespread job opportunities in-country, but also in demands for emigrant labour in the Middle East, Malaysia, Taiwan, Korea and Japan. Bangladeshi English teachers were recruited by Libya, Algeria and Tunisia during the mid-eighties. The ‘Report on Employment’ by the Bureau of Manpower (1993) puts the number of recruitment at 200,000 with predictions of significant increases in the future but there is concern that Bangladesh is losing this employment market to Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Philippines due primarily to poor English (*The Telegraph*, 23rd January 1993). Furthermore, the language is not just restricted to international contexts but is seen as a link language in an intra-regional role among the South Asian communities e.g. SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation).

Considering factors that have facilitated English to its current status, I have drawn on Ferguson’s (1996) typology and adapted it in order to categorise the functions of

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<sup>9</sup> Needless to say, many of these institutions indulge in unprofessional racketeering at the public’s expense.

English in Bangladesh today (Table 1.1). Ferguson showed the uses of Persian, Portuguese and English (the “superposed” languages) in Calcutta from 1760 to 1840 and presented 7 categories of use (*lingua franca*, *government*, *religion*, *education*, *literature*, *influence* and *development*). By *influence*, Ferguson meant the influence of the superposed language on the local language(s) – I have used it with the same meaning. *Development* was intended as management, technical access, governmental services and education (Ferguson and Dil 1979). In my typology *development* is extended to include trade, commerce, banking, industry, agriculture, environment, health, social services, tourism and travel. To these, I have added 5 more categories relevant to the current context, *employment* (both in-country and abroad), *communication* involving the electronic and digital network<sup>10</sup>, *social mobility*, the *media* and *music and entertainment*. I thus identify 12 domains of use.

Uses of English	Late 90s
<b>Lingua franca</b>	–
<b>Government</b>	–
<b>Religion</b>	–
<b>Education</b>	+
<b>Employment</b>	+
<b>Literature</b>	(+)
<b>Influence (on Bengali)</b>	(+)
<b>Development</b>	+
<b>Communication</b>	+
<b>Social mobility</b>	+
<b>Media</b>	+
<b>*Music and Entertainment</b>	+

(+): used to some extent

\* :satellite TV offers about 40 channels of which 93% are in English.

**Table 1.1: A typology of English use in Bangladesh today (adapted from Ferguson 1996)**

<sup>10</sup> Although opportunities to use different languages are available on the internet, it is evident that the cutting edge of information is biased towards English.



Of course it is important to recognise that these domains may overlap and also that the extent or intensity of use will vary from one domain to another. For example, whereas English is profusely used in *communication* signifying business, banking and the electronic information network, its use is fairly restrained in literary activities which find a more profuse and appropriate outlet in Bengali. English has extended its use quite aggressively within the last decade and the next section looks at its influence in a wider context – that of South Asia and the international arena.

#### **1.1.4 Attitudes towards English**

English today appears to have had the greatest pragmatic success in a variety of domains across cultures and is generally perceived positively (Kachru 1992). It is not only growing in stature in the outer circle but in the expanding circle as well.<sup>11</sup> The non-English speaking regions in the expanding circle – some with vast populations – are adopting English as a compulsory subject or the preferred optional language in primary and secondary education. English acquired new territories when China embarked on a campaign of modernisation and when the Soviet Union broke up. Some countries with colonial histories unrelated to Britain have adopted English. Tunisia, with its history of French colonisation and French as its second language, has introduced English at the secondary and tertiary levels while Laos, a former French colony has replaced French with English as a school subject. Vietnam and Cambodia have done likewise. Meanwhile Thailand, without a history of colonisation, is rigorously encouraging the learning of English while Japan and South Korea's emphatic development of English teaching programmes is evident of a similar trend. Davies (1989) pointed out ten years ago that it was difficult to think of any country where English was not being taught – today it would be almost impossible. R. Bailey (1996: 51) contends, "As long as people believe that English is a vehicle for their own aspirations (or those of their children) English will continue to be an important language". Indeed the supply of English in the whole of the South Asian region is now being actually outstripped by its demand (Baumgardner 1996).

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<sup>11</sup> Kachru 1985:13) distinguishes between native speaking areas (*the inner circle*), former British colonies where English is used as a second language (*the outer or extended circle*) and countries which are adopting English due to it being perceived as important and beneficial (*the expanding circle*).

Phillipson (1992a, 1992b) however, sees this shift of the discourse of English from a colonial legacy towards a rhetoric of development and the international free market as an active result of “linguicism”, a hegemonic enterprise by the “centre” (the core English-speaking countries) over the “periphery” (the previously colonised countries of South Asia and Africa) resulting in the cumulative expansion of English in the latter regions.<sup>12</sup> He claims such terms endow English and ELT with benevolent qualities seen as intrinsically good. Although Phillipson’s (1992a) documentation of “linguistic imperialism” makes interesting reading, it can be argued that some of the centre practices might simply have been the result of lack of foresight and ineptitude, and not an indulgence of calculated Machiavellian moves. (For further discussions on the issues of the power and politics, the manipulations and conflicts about the growth of English as a dominant world language, see Kramarae et al. 1984, Kachru 1986b). As regards Phillipson’s claim of current ELT practices continuing to be hegemonic today with demands being largely created by the centre, it appears reductionist as it denies periphery members the faculties of reason, appraisal or critical thinking. Pennycook’s (1994a) perception of the “worldliness of English”, on the other hand, allows for a recognition of the appropriative abilities of the periphery reflected in the varied discourses that English has been put to in different cultures and domains.

Bisong (1995) rejects Phillipson’s claims of “linguicism”, arguing that in spite of English being given official status in Nigeria, neither the local languages nor the local culture have been displaced or marginalised as it is perfectly natural for speakers from multilingual and multicultural societies to operate efficiently in several different codes. Both from a historical and a contemporary perspective, bilingualism or multilingualism among the world’s population have become the norm rather than the exception. In Bangladesh, a recent conference titled *Rethinking English* very plainly reflected a positive stance where English was seen as non-threatening to the national language or culture. Indeed the keynote speaker emphasised that “English has enabled us and can still enable us to be ourselves” (Prof. Chowdhury quoted in Karim 1997:10). This appears to be the general consensus in most countries that have seriously taken up the task of encouraging and expanding the teaching of English in their societies (see,

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<sup>12</sup> Phillipson’s *centre - periphery* distinctions roughly correspond to Kachru’s *inner* and *outer circles*. Kachru, however, as discussed earlier, identifies a third, the *expanding circle*

among others others, Dasgupta 1993 for a discussion of English in India, Jassem 1993 for Malaysia, Talib 1992 for the Arab world, Baumgardner 1993, 1995 for Pakistan, Fernando 1996 for Sri Lanka). Judging from current trends, English is being accepted as the vehicle for the urge to extend oneself and one's roles beyond the confines of one's culture and language (Bailey and Gorlach 1982, Cheshire 1991, Kachru 1992).

On the other hand, the English language is also seen as a source of social, ethical, and economic wrongs. Tickoo (1993) points out that a good many of these ills have resulted from a misunderstanding of the roles that this language is best placed to perform. Bailey (1983) accuses English of becoming the language of the powerful few at the expense of the powerless many. Cases too have been made against English for the marginalisation of minority languages in South Asia and Africa (see Fishman et al. 1968, Kramarae et al. 1984, Pattanayak 1996). Rogers (1982) has questioned the charade of teaching English to poverty-stricken masses in the developing world by holding out false hopes of a better future, arguing that English may not necessarily be the best means of access to development and progress. R Bailey (1996: 51) sums up this ethical issue in the following words: "Whether English learning and democracy is compatible in South Asia remains to be seen". Nevertheless, in spite of these troubling comments, the language has continued to be learnt and used and a knowledge of English has increasingly becoming a key to both professional and social advancement. Kramsch and Sullivan (1996: 200) describe the situation in the following words: "Most learners of English around the world use English to dream of better worlds".

A survey of influential language academics from South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) conducted by R. Bailey (1996) in the late-eighties adequately sums up the current state of English and the general attitude to the language prevalent in this region today. The survey findings show that:

- ◆ English after a period of marginalisation is definitely on the increase supported by conscious policy decisions;
- ◆ Its functions are being reallocated;
- ◆ It is present in a non-contentious role vis-à-vis the native language(s).
- ◆ The standard of proficiency is a matter of concern and needs addressing.

Reference may be made here to Crystal (1985) who argues that the modernisation and development effect is also determined by the attitude countries have towards the users of the target language and their worldly success. He maintains that attitudes exhibited towards English range on a continuum from *acquiescence* at one end to *antipathy* at the other, with *acceptance* somewhere in the middle. In Bangladesh, the attitude appears to be acceptance on the whole, perhaps a little grudgingly, as English, often not within easy reach of the multitude, is seen as the most potent instrument of social and economic advancement.

### 1.1.5 The question of norms

Due to a considerable period of vilification and the ubiquitous use of the first language, Bangladesh is obviously not among the countries where institutionalised second language varieties of English have developed as in the case of India, Nigeria, or Singapore. In these places, a greater linguistic awareness is resolving attitudinal conflicts between indigenous and external norms in favour of localised forms. In India, a country with which Bangladesh shares a deep geo-political affinity, the idea of the presence of English as a linguistic entity, with norms which are not entirely exonormative and distinct from native-speaker English has existed for some time, being greatly promoted by the pioneering work of Kachru since the mid-seventies. It has emphasised socio-linguistic and functional contexts in order to appreciate the discoursal features of the language used in the region. Kandiah (1991: 274) maintains that this body of work in India and other neighbouring countries have resulted in a new paradigm for the study of South Asian varieties of English (SAVEs). Extending this notion globally we come across McArthur's (1994) depiction of a kind of "organised Babel", a virtually indescribable continuum of English usage across the world.

This trend has had widespread repercussions, and we therefore speak of 'World Englishes' today where the need for mutual intelligibility far transcends the issue of norms and standards (Bailey and Gorlach 1982) (see the debate on native/non-native speakers in section 2.2.2.). Davies (1989: 452) considers prejudice toward "pure standards" a kind of fascism born of a spurious intellectual judgement and points out that the fallacy of such views is that they confuse *the code* with *the use of the code*. Sensitised into this overarching notion of the world ownership of English, Widdowson

(1994) condemns the upholding and preservation of ‘Standard English’ as a means of maintaining the elitist and Anglo-centric status of native-speaker experts in ELT. Jenkins (1998) argues that since the bulk of the English language used today is among non-native speakers, the focus should be on the issue of intelligibility across varieties of users. Crystal (1997) too asserts the need for ‘World Standard Spoken English’ rather than British, American or any other standard to cater to the varied needs of the 1,200-1,500 million first-language, second-language, and foreign-language speakers of English world-wide.

In this context it appears obvious that the question of standard and variety needs to be explored in Bangladesh. Although there is still no serious mention of Bangladeshi English, and although we *do* come across the derisive use of the term *Banglish* for locally used ‘deviant’ forms of the language, it is perhaps time for us to confront the indigenous forms increasingly being produced by educated users. My belief is that the linguistic awareness of educated Bengalis has not yet extended to an acceptance of any localised variety.<sup>13</sup> The majority still look to (or think they look to) British English for linguistic norms, and so an exonormative model of English is the prestige standard. Additionally, it must be recognised that linguistic norms have a far greater influence in an EFL situation like Bangladesh where language is learnt in a formal setting that fosters a heightened sense of linguistic insecurity.

According to Kandiah (1981), in a linguistic situation where traditionally an exonormative model is followed, schizoglossia will result where the ideal (an exonormative model) conflicts with the actual (an endonormative one). In my opinion, the linguistic situation regarding English in Bangladesh is following this “schizoglossic” route as is widely evident, for example, in the kind of language used by the media. There is no formal acceptance other than the exonormative model although reality shows the presence of an endonormative variety. A survey by Khan and Rahman (1986) on “common errors” among Bengali speakers of English amongst post-graduate professionals may be considered one of the early works in this field and does point to

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<sup>13</sup> According to Kachru (1983), the low status accorded to institutionalised varieties during the colonial era, stigmatised as *Babu English* (‘Babu’ meaning ‘a clerk’) - is the major stumbling block to acceptance now.

the existence of a localised variety in terms of collocations, borrowings and semantic shift. As the very term “error” indicates, the “ecological validity” (Kachru 1983) of the variety is doubted. In addition, Rahman (1996) reports the strong resentment expressed nation-wide on the publication of pedagogical materials for the higher secondary level (*English for Today Book VII*) incorporating local features of English. This clearly documents the firm grip that an exonormative model still has on language attitudes. Although we are still operating in an EFL situation (but increasingly moving towards a more liberal use), it is time for us to confront the indigenous forms increasingly being produced by Bangladeshi educated users. Empirical studies within the SAVE models of socio-linguistic research (as described by Kandiah 1991) are undoubtedly needed, as part of a gradual process of awareness-raising through public debate.<sup>14</sup>

## 1.2 ELT in Bangladesh

The previous section has detailed the growing presence of English as an additional language in Bangladesh. This brings us to the issue of how educational planning has addressed English in the curriculum. According to Dove (1983), educational planning is the application of rational systematic analysis to the process of educational development, so that national education may respond more effectively to the needs of individuals and the society. Coombs (1970), however, has pointed out that although educational planning per se is not the source of policies and decisions, people who have such responsibilities need to be guided by such planning. As I proceed through this section it becomes clear that in spite of concerns regularly voiced, there has not been an adequately defined educational planning strategy in terms of language development.

### 1.2.1 English language policy

Crystal (1995) has pointed out, English has no official status in Bangladesh but is universally used as the medium of international communication. It is difficult to outline a definite policy for the English language or its development in Bangladesh as there is

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<sup>14</sup>Note, however, the response of a leading academic of the Dhaka University English Department to a conference (*Rethinking English 1997*) participant’s suggestion to validate the type of “functional” English operating throughout South Asia and replace standard English with it. The academic disparagingly critiqued it as “an extreme recommendation” (Azim quoted in Karim 1997, my emphasis)

no formal declaration in language policy plans (see Jernudd 1981, Kachru 1981 for language planning and policy in the third world). Policy may be construed to be manifest through the government's educational pronouncements, reports and memoranda that appear from time to time. The most important educational planning actions related directly or indirectly to English are the following:

- ◆ 1972: Bengali to be the medium of instruction in all schools (with no mention of English)
- ◆ 1974: English to be introduced in year 6 and continue till year 12.
- ◆ 1976: English to be introduced from year 3.
- ◆ 1986: English to be introduced from year 1.
- ◆ 1994: English to be re-introduced in BA (pass) courses in colleges.
- ◆ 1996: English to be re-introduced in University undergraduate classes.
- ◆ 1996: The retirement age of all English teachers to be raised by 3 years.

The Education Ministry documents and reports significant for English teaching are:

- ◆ Report of the National Commission on Education, 1974.
- ◆ Report of the English Teaching Task Force, 1976.
- ◆ Report of the National Curriculum and Syllabus Formulation Committee, 1978.
- ◆ Report of the National Curriculum Syllabus Committee, 1985.
- ◆ Ministry of Education Memo, 1993.
- ◆ Ministry of Education Memo, 1995

It is a matter of concern that these plans and publications are never opened up for public debate. The strategy followed by policy dictates usually adheres to a mixture of the top-down *power-coercive model* (where knowledgeable people are seen as legitimate sources of power and the gatekeepers of change norms) and the *empirical-rational model* (where it is believed that clients will accept change in rational self-interest) (see Chin and Benne, 1976, for strategies of implementing change; also section 2.1.7 for a discussion on the management of educational change).

There is a consensus at the highest levels of the government machinery that after more than 25 years of independence and an alarming drop in standards (Allen 1994), Bangladesh fears marginalisation and is faced with the grim reality of lagging behind

neighbouring countries who are forging ahead in terms of access to the world market. The general feeling is that urgent measures need to be taken to reverse the decline in English standards, and to meet a critical need for curriculum reform and teacher training. This may be considered the general English language policy.

There are, however, some officials who confess that there is no policy, implying that all present action is motivated by crisis management tactics (personal communication). Nevertheless, the perception among the major donor agencies contributing to educational development is that the government is intent on action. It asks for donor assistance, and once the report of the donor is accepted, that report subsequently becomes the government's policy (Joint GOB/ODA Project Review 1994). Although a number of complex interrelated factors have led to this state of affairs, one of the government's convictions at the moment is that English is of key importance to national development. "All measures to achieve this end become willy nilly, government policy" (Joint GOB/ODA Project Review 1994:1). The next phase, the implementation stage, is another matter (see section 1.2.4).

### **1.2.2 English in the curriculum**

Although there has been widespread support for a new education policy consistent with the aspirations of the new-found independence, until 1983 there was neither institutional mechanism nor any permanent arrangement for planning, developing, experimenting and evaluating curricula. Previous to that, ad-hoc commissions and committees were set up from time to time to update and develop curricula, and these were dissolved as soon as their reports were submitted. The last committee known as the National Curriculum and Syllabus Committee (NCSC) was formed in 1976 and submitted several reports. Finally, the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) was set up in 1983 and is currently the main educational body responsible for primary and secondary education in Bangladesh and by the same token is responsible for all English language education in primary and secondary schools. The NCTB's main functions are to:

- examine curricula and syllabi and suggest revision,
- pre-test and evaluate effectiveness of the curricula, syllabi and textbooks,
- arrange for the writing of textbooks,



- approve currently available books and references.

In the case of English curriculum for schools, the National Commission for Education (1974) reported on the importance of English as the medium of international communication and recommended it be taught more effectively from year 6 to year 12 and that language rather than literature should be the focus (*Report of the National Commission on Education* 1974:14). With this in view the English Language Teaching Task Force was set up in 1975 to assess the situation of English language teaching in Bangladesh and to suggest ways of improving it. It reported proficiency among students of year 12 “was at least four years below the standard assumed in their textbooks” (*Report of the English Teaching Task Force* 1976:1). One of the recommendations was that “an appropriate graded syllabus should be introduced at each level and textbooks related to the needs and abilities of the students should be prepared” (p.3). Its immediate effect was the introduction of English from Class 3 in 1976.<sup>15</sup> (This decision was later ratified in the *Report of the National Curriculum and Syllabus Formulation Committee* in 1978).

In 1976, an English language teaching workshop evaluated the teaching of English, looking at recent approaches to teaching and explored writing materials for the higher secondary level. The workshop identified three different needs for learners of English in Bangladesh: *social*, *occupational* and *academic*, with the academic most significantly affecting the student population (Harrison 1976:1). It also pointed out that the current course was unsuitable to meet these demands as it was entirely literary in character and did not match students’ actual level of ability. It recommended that a new textbook be written to contain reading material graded according to linguistic difficulty that was less literary in character and had copious practice materials for developing skills of reading and, to a lesser extent, writing (Kerr 1976: 2).

In July 1976, the National Curriculum and Syllabus Committee (NCSC) was formed to devise syllabuses with separate committees earmarked for each subject. An English Syllabus Committee set to work based on the reports of the Task Force and the English

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<sup>15</sup> ‘Class’ corresponds to school year so that Class 6 is the sixth year of schooling & the first year of secondary school.

teaching workshop. On the basis of the recommendations made in these reports, the NCSC observed:

It follows that the English syllabus should be functional rather than literary and that every attempt should be made to break down the traditional bookish attitude to both education and English.  
(*Report of the National Curriculum and Syllabus Formulation Committee* 1978: 80)

Other recommendations of the NCSC were made in relation to objectives and content, and on the basis of that, topics of social, cultural, environmental and developmental interests were specified. New textbooks, *English for Today* (EFT), based on these specified criteria, began to be written from 1978 by groups of ELT specialists with native speaker support. Graded textbooks for classes 3 to 12 were completed by 1986. There was one book each for Classes 3 to 8, then a combined one for Classes 9 and 10 and another for the higher secondary Classes 11 and 12. Since 1990, an English curriculum revision project has revised the *EFT* books for secondary schools over a period of six years with an attempt to making them more compatible with the communicative approach (see section 1.2.4).

At this point it is relevant to mention the fate of one of these textbooks. Whereas most of them were generally accepted, the *EFT Book VIII* meant for the higher secondary level, created a furore. It was accused of using substandard localised forms of English, was withdrawn within 2 years and was replaced by the previous literature-based compilation *Higher Secondary English Selections* (see section 1.1.5). At the HSC level (Classes 11,12), then, students move from a language-based background to a collection of English poetry and prose ranging from Shakespeare to the turn of the century writings. Although the emphasis is completely on ‘literature’ (sic), attempts are made to preserve a grammar, essay, letter-writing component in the examination to pay lip service to ‘functional’ language use.

Returning to the discussion on materials used at the secondary level, from Class 6 onwards, extra grammars and ‘Rapid Readers’ (simplified literary texts – 1 out of 7 on offer) are added. With the introduction of English from Class 1 in 1986, the first two years use simplified primers that introduce the letters and the mechanics of spelling and writing. The next three years also use NCTB produced language-based textbooks that

attempt to introduce the language-based principle of the secondary level *EFT* books. All through, teachers and students rely heavily on locally produced 'Functional English' books, the guide books on grammar and translation (Rahman 1994, Sultana and Hoque 1995) (see Appendix 6B for a description of some of these materials). Recent policy has introduced English as a compulsory subject into the tertiary level and two studies by the University Grants Commission (UGC) into the modalities of this nation-wide venture have been made (Raynor 1995, UGC Report 1995). As this level is outside the scope of my study, I shall not go into any discussion but would comment that it is an enterprise that will gravely test the will, the capacity and the resources of the tertiary administration. The three absolute necessities of language-based learning – small class size, appropriate materials, qualified ELT practitioners make the whole issue a mind-boggling enterprise. Raynor (1995) estimates it would entail creating 7000 new posts for English teachers to cater for a student body of 300,000 each year.

### **1.2.3 Standards of English at secondary level**

In spite of the emphasis on English in the curriculum and the timetable, standards of English especially in the rural areas are extremely poor (Rahman 1986, 1991, Musa 1989, Shrubsall 1992, 1993, Sultana and Hoque 1995, Hoque 1996). The Report of the English Teaching Task Force (1976), the Rahman, McGinley and McGinley Study (1981), the University Grants Commission Report (1988) and the Baseline Survey of secondary school English teaching and learning (1990) have all shown similar results.

The first extensive study into the proficiency levels of English was carried out by the 1976 English Teaching Task Force. A large sample study of Classes 9 and 12 at 45 schools and colleges was carried out on the basis of proficiency tests. It found that at Class 9, students were 2 years behind the level assumed in the coursebooks while at Class 12, they were 4 years behind. Rahman et al. (1981) also found a 4-year lag in English proficiency among students entering tertiary education. The UGC report (1988) too found a wide gap between proficiency needed to successfully perform at tertiary level and those actually achieved at the end of the higher secondary stage. The 1990 Baseline Survey of 1400 students at 20 schools in different parts of the country showed no improvement in spite of the fact that English had been made compulsory at primary

level since 1976 and new textbooks had been introduced at all levels.<sup>16</sup> Proficiency tests administered to Classes 6 and 8 based on language items covered in the prescribed textbooks at those levels showed a general failure to reach the required standards. A summary of the findings are given below:

1. In all three categories of schools visited [government, private urban and private rural], the majority of students are not attaining satisfactory levels of proficiency, as measured against the requirements of the syllabus and textbooks in use.
  2. The situation is particularly serious in the non-government rural schools, where over 95% of the students in Class 6 and 8 are failing to reach the expected standards of proficiency. In addition, over 70% of these students at Class 6 and 80% at Class 8 have a command of the language being taught which is close to non-existent.
  3. Given these results, it is almost inevitable that the weaker students (i.e. the vast majority) will fall progressively further behind as they move up through the school. The lower scores achieved at Class 8 than at Class 6 suggest that this is happening.
  4. The situation is a little better in the government schools, but even here, over 50% of the students are failing to reach the supposed standards at Class 6, and at Class 8, 75% appear to be falling behind.
  5. In the Teacher Training Colleges, the majority of trainees (80%) cannot be considered proficient as teachers in material taught at Class 8 (i.e. they scored less than 75% on the class test), yet they are expected to teach up to Class 10. Of these trainees, over a quarter are failing to reach the minimum level of proficiency (50%) required of the students.
  6. The results indicate continued low levels of English language proficiency throughout the secondary school and teacher training levels. In the non-government rural schools, the situation can only be described as desperate.
- (*Baseline Survey of Secondary School English Teaching and Learning* 1990: 24)

Poor standards of English extended to the teachers too, given their lack of training and competence and was regarded a predominant cause for the overall situation. Indeed the 1976 Task Force Report had stated that only 15% of English teachers were capable of teaching up to Class 10 and, 14 years later, the 1990 survey did not show any improvement on teacher performance. The Baseline Survey reported that most communication during the study (even when it involved interacting with native speakers of English) had to take place through the medium of Bengali. In addition, it

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<sup>16</sup> A more recent baseline study (1998-99) has just been completed but the findings have yet to be finalised.

reported that written proficiency tests administered to trainees at 5 teacher training colleges demonstrated that only 25% achieved a score of 75% on a Class 8 level test (considered a minimum requirement to teach with confidence at that level). The majority (75%) scored only 50% marks. The proficiency of teachers teaching Classes 9 and 10 were equally discouraging. And yet these same teachers remain in demand, with the Ministry of Education in 1997 raising the retirement age of all English teachers by three years to cope with the increasing requirement for teaching staff.

This is perhaps the reason why most of the teaching in English classes is done in Bengali (Sultana and Hoque 1995). Shrubbsall (1992, 1993) claims that the vast majority of students going through the secondary cycle do not go beyond the absolute beginner's level. In 1996, overall poor results in HSC examinations with a 5–10% pass figure (Alam quoted in Karim 1997), resulted in threatening postures by the Ministry of Education to withdraw funding from low achieving private schools (*The Bangladesh Observer*, 29 November 1996). This provides an overall picture of the English language teaching situation in Bangladesh.

#### **1.2.4 Recent attempts at ELT reform**

The aim of reform in this area undoubtedly has to be the improvement of the quality and relevance of ELT in Bangladesh. How far this has been the Education Ministry's objective and how far it has affected outcomes needs to be evaluated. The entire history of ELT in Bangladesh has been a series of reformulations from time to time as is evident from the education commission or committee reports and announcements (see sections 1.2.1, 1.2.2). In the decade following independence the focus has been on quantity – the expansion of English teaching provision, first introduced from Class 6, then from Class 3, and finally right from the first year of primary school. Having exhausted one end of the schooling continuum, the authorities have now concentrated on the other end and so English has been introduced into the tertiary level with the result that students now have 14 years of 'English'. This emphasis on an uncontrolled educational expansion without a corresponding provision for trained teachers, teaching and learning facilities and other supporting infrastructure, has created an environment which is vulnerable to all sorts of problems (see section 1.2.2 for the enormous pressure on almost non-existent resources in introducing English at the tertiary level). Nwagwu

(1997: 87) claims that any society which stimulates uncoordinated growth of its education system and then fails to support this growth adequately, creates “an environment of crises”. Dove (1980), nearly two decades ago, pointed to the weak capacity of planning and administrative systems as an offshoot of the political context of education in the country. Although I would hesitate to accuse the administration of such measures, it still has a long way to go to match action and resources to promises.

These expansionist decisions have occasionally been tactics of crisis management (see section 1.2.1). ELT curricula reform has been until recently a case of treating symptoms but ignoring the disease i.e. working without a clear and co-ordinated understanding of the entire situation – the language competencies required of learners, the backwash effect of the examinations, the constraints on resources, the adequate management of change, among other things. Governments change and with them, policies change, and as each administration tries to take credit for fresh policies and ideas, long-term projects remain at the mercy of administrative predilections. For example, in 1993, the report from an urgent feasibility study for the establishment of regional English language centres requested enthusiastically and duly carried out (Khan and Taylor 1993) was shelved mysteriously. In spite of the administration’s continued requests for assistance in curriculum reform, it failed in 1996 to renew the secondary English curriculum revision project which was started in 1990 and had completed three 2-year phases. However, Raynor (1995: 5), in her study of English at the tertiary level, hinted at a “major new UK-ODA supported programme focusing on the training of teachers, appropriate methodologies and materials etc”.<sup>17</sup> Thus intentions, however well-meaning, often suffer from lack of planning and foresight and the whims and exigencies of politicians and the bureaucracy. Allen (1994: 5) maintains, “The present state of English language teaching in Bangladesh represents a significant misapplication of human resources, time and money”.

Furthermore, the 70s and early-80s saw some ELT reforms which were isolated efforts, and depending on donor interests, there were attempts at setting up language

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<sup>17</sup> This hint has materialised into a recently launched country-wide English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP) for secondary schools which has an ambitious programme for improving the teaching of communicative English and includes teacher development, materials improvement and testing reforms. A significant feature is an in-built research element.

laboratories in teacher training institutions, as well as an ESP curriculum unit at the University of Dhaka. Needless to say, these were hardly success stories. Moreover, most reforms appear to be linked to foreign aid, and to grants which are often tied to donor agendas that address covert market forces that do not always coincide with national or local interests (see Pennycook 1989). At the same time, the local machinery works with its own hidden agenda that thwarts reform attempts (see section 6.1.5 for the attitudes of secondary school English teachers towards an orientation programme on the communicative approach in the use of the revised EFT books). Oxtoby (1997: 99) claims that the technical vocational training programme in Bangladesh “is notoriously resistant to change”. This statement may be extended to reform attempts in ELT. However, this is not a unique feature to this region, or to this particular field, as the literature on the management of educational innovation records countless unsuccessful attempts (Fullan 1989, Crookes 1993, Markee 1997) – see section 2.1.7.

Since the mid-80s there has been a realisation about long term commitments to co-ordinated reform perhaps encouraged by donor interests in projectisation. There have been massive programmes for the revision of the syllabus and textbooks at the primary level supported by the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the UNICEF. At the secondary level, the ODA (now DFID) has supported the revision of the EFT textbooks together with the orientation of English language secondary school teachers (the OTEFL project) and the syllabus revision of the B.Ed. English specialisation course in teacher training colleges (the last being the object of my investigation). The Bangladesh Institute of Distance Education has been recently reformulated as an Open University and has started a 2-year B.ELT course for English language teachers as well as a distance learning English certificate package at a basic proficiency level (CELP). Nonetheless, quality assurance remains a crucial issue.

### **1.3 Education: structure, administration and ethos**

Education is generally seen in developmental terms as a means of providing trained manpower and a key agent for instilling social, ethical values and attitudes (Dove 1983, 1986). The present education system is a modified version of the colonial structure introduced in 1854 by the British in the Indian subcontinent and displays both the power and the inertia of an inherited system with which many post-colonial countries

have been struggling to come to terms (Banya 1993). Education is centrally controlled and administered by the Ministry of Education which is responsible for all basic policy decisions, the processing of development plans and the allocation of funds. UNDP reported in 1992 that the government's allocation of its annual budget on education (2.2%) was amongst the lowest in the world. By 1997-1998, the annual allocation had increased to 14.64% (BANBEIS 1998). Currently education is being given top priority in planning and development, not least because of international donor pressures.

As in most countries, the Ministry of Education remains at the peak of the educational mechanism with line Directorates each responsible for primary, secondary and higher secondary, and technical education. The Ministry provides the broad policy and the line Directorates are responsible for the implementation of decisions, operating through their respective divisional departments and agencies. The secondary schools are administered under the authority of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education that comprises 4 divisional offices and 8 zonal offices with sub-offices in each district headed by a District Education Officer.

Besides the Directorates, there are two other streams that work simultaneously, the attached Departments of the Education Ministry which perform specialised functions (like the NCTB, NIEAER, BANBEIS) and the autonomous bodies which function independently such as the Universities, the University Grants Commission, the four Boards of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, the two Boards of Madrasa Education and Technical Education (the latter six Boards affiliate schools and conduct the national secondary and higher secondary certificate examinations).

The supervision of teachers and schools is the responsibility of an Inspectorate in each of 8 zones. There are only 2 inspectors and 2 assistant inspectors and given the large numbers they have to supervise, their work is mainly administrative. They may observe teachers in classes but professional guidance or counselling is not emphasised. Consequently teachers receive very little professional support from the Inspectorate. UNDP (1992) reports that 42% of schools were never visited by the Inspectorate.

Within schools, there is a similar top-down administrative and management hierarchy with the head teacher at the top and senior teachers holding positions of power. Often



an English Masters' degree (irrespective of the quality of the achievement) can assure a head teachership in a secondary school (particularly in the private sector). The head teacher holds an administrative and management post and does not usually take part in any teaching.

### **1.3.1 Secondary schools**

The secondary schools function under the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education. According to BANBEIS (1998), there are 10,776 secondary schools (317 government and 10,459 non-government) with an enrolment of 5.49 million students. With a greater thrust in government policy into education and economic development, there has been an increasing demand for secondary education, resulting in a rise in institutions and student enrolment each successive year. From 1990 to 1995 there has been an increase of 7% in new secondary schools and 1.53 million in student enrolment with female enrolment rising from 33% in 1990 to 46% in 1995 (BANBEIS 1996). There is therefore a constant pressure on school authorities to provide teaching staff and material resources to meet the growing demand for secondary education. Indeed Vashisth (1992) points out how the extremely rapid growth of the school-age population has compelled education authorities in developing countries to resort to all sorts of expedients that are actually contributing to the decline in the quality of education. And yet a UNDP study (1992) reports that 30% of physical resources present in secondary schools are under utilised.

The government's 'universal primary education' policy stipulates that education and books are provided free at primary level (Classes 1-5) in state schools. However, malpractices involving some schools and publishers who cash in on weaknesses in the delivery system, have been reported by the media (Bar 1999, *The Daily Star* Editorial, 7 February 1999). From Class 6 onwards (the first year of secondary school) education is no longer free although the price of school textbooks designed and published by the NCTB is kept low and tuition fees are hugely subsidised in government-run schools. Even then 21% of households are too poor to afford education (UNDP Report 1992).

In government schools, resources and facilities are relatively good and fees are low and therefore there is tremendous competition and immense pressure for admission. There

are, however, only 317 of these schools and they are situated primarily in cities and towns. The remaining 10,459 are private or non-government schools. A few of these (less than 1%) in parts of Dhaka and Chittagong are highly prestigious independent institutions and together with the cadet colleges form the cream of the secondary schools in the country. The great majority, however, around 90%, are rural schools (Cullen 1991a). These schools are usually smaller and substantially poorer in terms of facilities and the quality of education offered. The government extends salary-support for teachers but all other costs are borne by the schools themselves. Therefore tuition fees are relatively higher than the government schools. However, as the student catchment is generally poor, high fees cannot be a reality. Consequently, these schools are ill-staffed, poorly resourced and provide inadequate education. Though many of these schools were started by influential local figures, there is seldom any community involvement in raising funds for schools or supporting school activities (Haq 1989). This is regrettable as *community participation* is one of the requisite features identified by UNESCO in Asia. Ordonez (1997) maintains communities need to own educational projects and participate in them, otherwise they are not sustainable.

There is no effective regulatory body to oversee standards of education in the country and therefore several schools may have a rather dubious existence. As for student continuity in school, the figures are depressing – the drop out rate at the end of primary school in 1995 was 54% (JICA 1995) and at the end of secondary school 47.5% (BANBEIS 1996), notwithstanding the Minister for Education's claim in Parliament that the 1998 drop out figures stood at 38 % at the primary level and 43.6% at secondary (reported by *The Daily Star*, 23 November 1998).

There are three more sets of schools – 'madrashas', cadet colleges and private English medium schools. The 4,795 secondary madrashas (BANBEIS 1998)—all non-government and under a separate directorate— provide Islamic education with English as optional but most madrashas offer English (another example of its popularity). There are 11 residential cadet colleges under the administrative control of the Defence Forces. Rigorous entrance requirements (at age 12) secure a crop of fairly competent students while quality staff and generous resources together with a boot camp discipline ensure

a high degree of academic standard.<sup>18</sup> Finally, there are a number of privately administered English medium schools in large cities not officially recognised within the education system but which have grown, and are growing, significantly out of their own dynamics. There are 20 schools that do the GCEs O-Levels and A-Levels examinations under British Boards. The British Council states the annual increase in students taking GCEs is about 340 since 1994/95. Needless to say, only very wealthy families send their children to these schools. It may be pointed out that even these schools (for all their elitism) do not have very well trained teachers among their staff. As I am concerned with English teachers in government and government-supported private schools, these three sets of schools are outside the scope of my study.

### **1.3.2 The educational ideology**

According to White (1988) no curriculum or teaching decision anywhere is value-neutral. Drawing on the typology of educational ideology (Clark 1987), it might be quite appropriate to state that Bangladeshi society reflects the *classical humanistic* value system which in turn is reflected in the broad aims of education, curriculum design and classroom methodology (see Figure 1.2). The situation appears to support Cortazzi and Jin's (1996a, 1996b) argument of linking educational ideologies to national cultures. Bangladeshi society is strictly defined in hierarchical terms established by tradition. As a result, in the classroom, the teacher is authoritative and authoritarian, indeed autocratic (Khan 1995). Shamim (1993) and Patra (1994) depict a similar educational culture in Pakistan and India respectively.

Knowledge is seen as a monolithic entity, a finite, inflexible 'object', to be accepted whole and to be memorised and regurgitated in class and during examinations. The syllabus is content-driven, therefore there is a strong desire to believe in the ultimate authority of textbooks. As in many educational cultures, textbooks carry a unique authority and are recognised and accepted as the legitimate version of the society's sound knowledge (Altbach and Kelley 1988, Dendrinos 1992). There is usually no fostering of critical thinking or an experiencing of relative realities (Rahman 1991,

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<sup>18</sup> The 1976 Task Force reported cadet colleges as a body had reached a satisfactory level of English at secondary and higher secondary stages. The study did not include English medium schools in its survey.

Shrubsall 1992, 1993, Khan 1995). This leads to a rigid value system that does not cope easily with options, choices or change resulting in a total divorce between the idealised world presented in the classroom and the messiness of the real world outside.

	CLASSICAL HUMANISM	RECONSTRUCTIONISM	PROGRESSIVISM
<i>Value System in Education: Basic Features</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Promotion of generalisable intellectual capacities</li> <li>•Maintenance and transmission of the knowledge, culture, and standards of one generation to another</li> <li>•The creation of an elite of guardians</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Social change through education, planned to lead towards certain agreed goals</li> <li>•Egalitarian concern for the equal valuing of all citizens</li> <li>•Emphasis on practical relevance of curriculum to social goals of the nation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The development of the individual as a whole person</li> <li>•The promotion of learner responsibility and of a capacity for learning how to learn</li> </ul>
<i>Broad Aims of School &amp; Language Teaching &amp; Learning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•To promote general intellectual capacities such as memorisation, analysis, classification, synthesis, and judgement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•To promote social, intranational, international unity and tolerance, through enabling pupils to communicate with other speech communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•To promote individual development, and enable pupils to create wider networks of personal relationships</li> <li>•To learn how to learn, and how to learn a language</li> </ul>
<i>Impact on Syllabus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Subject-driven</li> <li>•Content-driven</li> <li>•Content derived from an analysis of the subject matter into its constituent elements of knowledge</li> <li>•Sequencing of elements of knowledge from simple to complex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Goal-centred, ends-means approach</li> <li>•Objectives derived from analysis of objective behavioural needs of learners</li> <li>•Sequencing in terms of particular skills leading to global activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Process approach</li> <li>•Process-driven, therefore emphasis on principles of procedure</li> <li>•Principles of procedure are derived from study of the learning process</li> <li>•Sequencing globally in terms of tasks</li> <li>•Learners impose own sequence on what is learnt</li> </ul>
<i>Impact on Teaching Methodology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Transmission view of learning</li> <li>•Teacher-directed</li> <li>•Concerned to promote conscious understanding of rules behind the surface phenomena</li> <li>•Control of learning when reapplying in new contexts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•‘Good habit’ forming</li> <li>•Practice of particular skills</li> <li>•Rehearsal of behavioural goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Learner-centred</li> <li>•Experiential learning</li> <li>•Promotion of learner responsibility</li> <li>•Learning how to learn (learner developing own learning strategies)</li> </ul>

**Table 1. 2: Educational Ideology (Clark 1987)**

In Frierean terms, the educational culture appears to be an embodiment of the ‘pedagogy of the oppressed’. Friere (1970) maintains that there is no such thing as

neutral education. Education either functions as an instrument of socialising, integrating the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bringing about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom – learners deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. In Bangladesh the educational ethos follows the first route which in many ways is an inflexible orientation based on the classical humanistic paradigm.

#### **1.4. Summary and conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter has been to provide the context within which my study of teachers' beliefs and attitudes and its relevance to teacher education provisions needs to be seen. The information presented here constitutes something of a *baseline* that forms the substructure and establishes a frame of reference for my investigation. According to van Lier (1988), the baseline guides observation and interpretation during an enquiry and underlies efficient descriptive and analytic work<sup>19</sup>.

To summarise, I have shown, following a short historical account of the English language in the Indian subcontinent, how English has developed, despite an absence of a definite language policy, from a discourse of colonial liability to a pragmatics of modernism and development, a few ethical questions notwithstanding. The alarm at declining standards of English in schools and the workforce, viewed from a fast-changing socio-economic perspective, have initiated a series of attempts at ELT curriculum reform. Sadly, these endeavours appear more in line with short-term crisis management than long-term sustainable schemes and may have contributed to the unsatisfactory state of ELT in the school system.

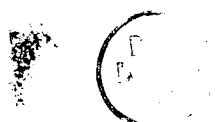
To understand the educational setting further, I outline the nature of secondary schools and the proficiency level of English teachers within a wider educational framework. Schools in relation to student population are found to be inadequate both in quantity and in quality. The educational ethos superimposes certain beliefs and norms of

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<sup>19</sup> I hasten to add that in my classrooms observations and interviews with teachers, I kept an open mind (in keeping with the ethnographic approach) and refused to be biased by information about educational culture and ELT that has been presented, on the basis of secondary data, in this chapter and in chapter 4.

conduct where knowledge is viewed as monolithic, teachers as authoritarian, and teaching as transmissive.

In conclusion it may be argued that despite the many-faceted difficulties, the situation may be improved by enhancing the teacher's ability through effective teacher education (see chapter 2 which justifies the teacher as being at the heart of the educational process). As such, it is necessary to investigate the facilities available for educating secondary school English teachers in Bangladesh. But before that, I review in the next two chapters, the literature that has contributed to the current discourse of second language teacher education and attempt to formulate a framework of principles that may be recognised as underlying a coherent language teacher education programme.



## CHAPTER 2

### Language teaching and the teacher: trends and issues

#### 2. Introduction

In spite of the widespread realisation regarding the value of educating the teacher, it is relevant to note at the outset that the work to date on foreign/second language teacher education (henceforth SLTE)<sup>20</sup> has not been very substantial. More than a decade ago, Bernhardt and Hammadou (1987) in their survey of the past decade (1977-1987) of research in foreign language teacher education in the United States identified only 78 articles. More disturbing was their discovery of a lack of awareness of mainstream teacher education insights in these articles. Lange (1990), referring to the three editions of the American Education Research Association's *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (Gage 1963, Travers 1973, Wittrock 1986), pointed out there was no specific chapter on the teaching of or the preparation of teachers for ESL. My own examination of the two editions of the *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* (Houston 1990, Sikula et al. 1996) unearthed only one paper (O'Donnell 1990) devoted to research on English language teacher education where again it was regretted that a computer search of the ERIC database had brought forth a negligible percentage of articles on English language teacher preparation. Additionally, my search of the British Educational Index database over the last two decades (1976-1998) showed up only 116 journal papers on SLTE (although a closer scrutiny indicated several of them did not relate directly to teacher education but to language teaching). A more alarming result came from a search under *English* language teacher education which produced just 11 articles. Obviously then there has been insufficient work in the field of SLTE.

It is not surprising therefore that findings on SLTE are slight compared to those related to second language teaching itself. There is also a growing concern that much of the information available is not based on reliable data (Widdowson 1990) and that some of it is relatively speculative, comprising an anecdotal wish list of what is best for the

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<sup>20</sup>In my discussions SLTE will subsume FLTE (foreign language teacher education) as well as EFLTE/ESLTE (English as a foreign/second language teacher education).

teacher (Richards and Nunan 1990). Hence Richards (1998) argues that teacher education ideas are often built on unexamined assumptions. Rea-Dickens (1994) points to the fact that there has not been any significant formative evaluation of the quality of *English* language teacher education. To this I would add that most information available on English language teacher education focuses primarily on *native-speaker* English teachers and quite infrequently on *non-native speaker* teachers, although in demographic terms, the latter form the bulk of EFL/ESL teachers throughout the world (cf. Medgyes 1994). Thus it is widely accepted that the ‘findings’ generated so far have been inadequate for developing a coherent theory of SLTE (Edge 1989, 1992, Maley 1992, 1995, Prabhu 1992, Johnson 1992, Underhill 1992, Ur 1996, Freeman and Richards 1996, Richards 1998). Indeed Freeman (1998: viii) maintains that the concept of SLTE remains “an awkward, and at times undefined, hybrid”.

It may be further pointed out that in spite of a plethora of theoretical and practical knowledge about second language pedagogy, there is concern that *language teaching* itself still lacks a sound structure of systematic knowledge that can explain and direct it (Allwright and Bailey 1991). Likewise there has not been any lasting claims on how well learners learn a foreign language nor how well teachers teach. Stones (1994) maintains there is a considerable body of research in the field that suggests there is no consensus on what constitutes good teaching. And yet teacher education curricula are seen to be informed by findings from classroom research (Nunan 1992). A further significant concern currently voiced is that these research findings are based on the teaching process itself and on learning outcomes, and hardly on the process of teachers’ *learning to teach* (Richards 1990a, Almarza 1992, Freeman 1996a).

Although there have been some attempts in recent years (as in the work reported in Freeman and Richards 1996), the investigation of the *learning-to-teach* process either in training courses or in classroom encounters needs to be complemented by studies on teacher learning and development in a variety of contexts. However, Richards (1990a) has pointed out that such research is difficult as two different approaches are required, each leading in a different direction, one from which theories of teaching and the other from which theories and principles for teacher preparation programmes can be developed (see section 2.2.4). Furthermore, the generalisability of findings has long been called into question. Thus Widdowson (1997) sounds a caveat with his suggestion



that there might be something specific about *second language* teachers which might need to be accounted for in their education. I would go a little further with the view that, in terms of a growing concern with issues of context and culture across the profession (Holliday 1994c), there might be something specific about *non-native second language teachers in developing contexts* that might warrant even further special consideration.

In order to establish the ground for my study on SLTE in Bangladesh, I attempt now to map the terrain by undertaking a survey of the major elements that have influenced and directed knowledge and practices in this field. This involves investigating not only second language pedagogy and language teacher education but also, where appropriate, drawing on developments in *mainstream* teacher education. Based on this survey I will attempt a conceptual framework for an approach to SLTE.

Taking as my point of departure the fact that there is a lack of substantial generalisable findings on the learning of second languages and even less on the process of *learning to teach* such languages, I undertake, in section 1, to explore multi-disciplinary fields in order to draw on developments that have informed the assumptions and approaches evolved within second language teaching and in a vicarious way, SLTE itself. In section 2, in order to understand current attitudes to language teacher education, I examine the different perspectives within which the teacher, particularly the English language teacher, has been viewed. In chapter 3, I continue my survey by examining issues in teacher education itself. I examine two themes that have been significant – the relationship between *theory* and *practice* and the concepts of *education* and *training* as understood and practised within SLTE. Based on this I move on to investigate some models of language teacher education from which I attempt to consolidate the main principles that underlie the current approach in this field.

## **2.1 Influences on language teaching and teacher education**

As a discipline, second language teacher education is a relatively recent phenomenon. According to Freeman (1998), the focus has been mainly on the first two words *second language* rather than on the last two words *teacher education*. As such it has been influenced primarily by knowledge about the nature of language and language learning

rather than by any insights in relation to the development of the teacher. The outcome has been the formulation of language curriculum models imposed on the language teacher with teacher education revolving more around a language *learning* theory rather than a language *teaching* theory (Larsen-Freeman 1990). It is interesting to note that in mainstream education Jackson (1968) had argued nearly three decades ago that a *learning theory* did not necessarily equate with a *teaching theory*.

It is no surprise therefore that as far as influences on theory development underpinning the practices of language pedagogy in general and English language teaching (ELT) in particular are concerned, the most significant has been, *theoretical linguistics* with its descriptions of the nature of language. This knowledge base, extended by the *socio-psychological* theories emanating from such disciplines as *psychology*, *sociology* and *ethnomethodology* has formed the general discourse of second language teaching. Since the early eighties, *education*, clearly the most important discipline relevant to pedagogy, has started to receive attention. Recent developments along contextual and cultural perspectives point towards directions at understanding critically the issues related not only to pedagogy but also to specificities of context and to the nature of educational change itself. These orientations indicate that a multi-disciplinary approach is possibly needed to develop a coherent theory of SLTE.

### **2.1.1 Tradition and method**

Kelly (1969) claims that the question of how to teach languages has been debated for over twenty-five centuries but Stern (1983a) and Howatt (1984) maintain serious discussions involving theory development as a basis for the debate on various methods of teaching evolved only over a little more than the last hundred years<sup>21</sup>. Despite this until quite recently, curriculum developers have endeavoured to promote language teaching by focusing almost exclusively on teaching method. Not surprisingly, this has been reflected in language teacher education programmes where emphasis on skills and techniques favoured by methods in vogue have received attention.

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<sup>21</sup> It is interesting to note that Comenius, the seventeenth century pioneer of modern educational science, advocated a remarkable set of assumptions for language teaching far ahead of his time. Whether the language pedagogy scene would have been different today if his ideas had taken root is worth reflecting.

In describing the term *method*, attempts have been made to distinguish between a philosophy of language teaching at the level of principles and a set of derived procedures for classroom implementation. Anthony (1963) has identified three levels of conceptualisation organised hierarchically, *approach* (the assumptions dealing with the nature of language learning and teaching), *method* (the procedural plan for presentation of materials) and *technique* (classroom implementation in the form of activities). “The organisational key is that *techniques* carry out *a method* which is consistent with *an approach*” (Anthony 1963: 63). However, the term *method* has not always been used in an unequivocal way, resulting in reformulation of the expression. For example, Richards and Rodgers (1986) interpret *method* as an overarching concept realised through *approach*, *design* and *procedure*. In vogue with current preferences for strong and weak views, I consider Richards and Rodgers’ signification a stronger view and Anthony’s a weaker one.

The term *method* as used in this section, entails a weak definition in accordance with Anthony’s concept of technique including classroom tricks, stratagems, contrivances that teachers resort to in order to help or ‘make’ students learn. Perhaps for reasons of being observable, tangible and hence the sensible thing to do, the importance of method has existed through time as a way of initiating intending teachers into their classroom roles. While Richards (1990a: 3) maintains SLTE has been traditionally influenced by a body of practice based “almost exclusively on intuition and common sense”, Richards and Rodgers (1986) single out tradition as the guiding principle for this practice. Wallace (1991 citing Stones and Morris 1972), states the most traditional procedure in teaching practice till about the end of the Second World War was for apprentice teachers to observe and imitate the techniques of practising *master* teachers. This followed the ‘craft’ model of professional development with its assumptions of a transmissive view of knowledge catering to a rather static society.

And yet the assumptions behind the approach to the method framework has ignored a key dimension of the teacher’s learning process. It overlooks the fact that personal learning experiences and socialisation have lasting effects on many teachers. This is due to the fact that like millions of children every day, they have watched their own teachers throughout their school life in what Lortie (1975) has so aptly called “the apprenticeship of observation”. This apprenticeship gives a close-up extended view of

what teachers do, a view that is neither analytic nor explicit but rather intuitive and imitative, acting as a powerful socialising force. These experiences (the observable behavioural classroom traits subsumed under my weak definition of method) are internalised and generalised and then converted into habits and traditions, to be replicated by the teacher in the classroom. There is general assertion and agreement about practices but very little justification or evaluation. Buchman (1987) calls this phenomenon “the folkways of teaching” borrowing the concept from Graham Sumner’s 1906 work, *Folkways and Mores*.

These folkways of teaching are typical; by contrast to the theories of scholars, they are patterns of action and interpretation that are existent, considered right, and mostly uncoded.  
(Buchman 1987: 176)

Therefore Buchman uses the term “teaching knowledge” (knowledge related to the activity of teaching) as distinct from “teacher knowledge” (knowledge that is special to teachers as a group). She maintains that the informal occupational socialisation of teachers may provide the key to the collective common-sense nature of existing teaching knowledge. My investigation into English language teachers’ perceptions of classroom teaching in secondary schools in Bangladesh appears to reflect this in more ways than one (see chapter 6 *passim*).

Following on from this, it is little wonder that classroom-based research has shown that even with training, teachers often do not change the way they teach but continue to follow familiar patterns of teaching. Britten (1988) identifies this as *a transfer problem* which occurs when fully qualified teachers adopt patterns of teaching behaviour that had been stigmatised during training but which they had seen being used by their own teachers at school and which may still be used by many of their older colleagues. And therefore Altman (1983: 24) strongly advises teacher educators to remember that “teachers teach as they were taught not as they were taught to teach”. It appears then that the net effect of training in its current linear, rather prescriptive form, may actually serve to alienate teachers from accepting any change in their approaches to teaching.

In Bernhardt and Hammadou’s (1987: 292) view, there is a general absence of awareness that “potential foreign language teachers spend the majority of their pre-

service education observing basically untrained foreign language teachers” and even the major part of their education programme is spent in “observation of professionals who have little demonstrated interest or prior training in language teaching”. This latter claim is somewhat dubious, at least in the Anglo-centric context, in view of the fact that due to an increased demand for language teachers and a consequent need to train these teachers, many who started their careers as teachers have moved on to become teacher trainers or are responsible, in some way, for the professional development of language teachers, as pointed out by Wallace (1991). Nevertheless, in contexts like Bangladesh, Bernhardt and Hammadou’s criticism may be legitimate.

In terms of implications for SLTE, an intuitive and common sense method approach and a transmission view of craft as discussed above, is at variance with the current recognition of complex and dynamic processes involved in language learning and teaching. There is now a growing recognition for approaches to be underpinned by informed assumptions and to be illuminated by reflection and analysis. In this current scenario, new prospects for teacher learning emerge. Thus, the powerful influence of *observation*, maligned for so long, now offers a renewed potential in teacher education. This is evident from the practice of using classroom data (transcripts, videos of lessons, diaries) and integrating them into reflective and analytic modes in a teacher’s repertoire of learning as exemplified by Ramani (1987), Bailey (1990), Cullen (1991b, 1995), Borg (1998) (see section 3.2.3). The point I am making is that SLTE with its recent insights may be able to usefully exploit a phenomenon (i.e. observation) which has hitherto been denounced as a negative influence on teacher development.

### **2.1.2 Linguistics and the nature of language**

Language teaching pedagogy has been informed mainly by three different views of the nature of language and language learning emanating from linguistics and its allied sub-disciplines. Richards and Rodgers (1986: 16-17) identify them as three views of language: the *structural* (language as a system of structurally related elements for coding of meaning), the *functional* (language as a vehicle for expression of functional meaning) and the *interactional* (language as a realization of interpersonal relations and performance of social interactions). These views or variations on them have provided the principles underpinning approaches to second language curriculum design and

methodology. These have been complemented (and at times confounded) by theories of language acquisition provided by psycholinguistics (see section 2.1.2).

Historically, the first linguistic component in language teaching theory was introduced with the Reform Movement in the late nineteenth century when an emphasis was made on the value of training language teachers in the new science of phonetics (Howatt 1984). Daniel Jones' contributions to English phonetics, the pronunciation of English and the compilation of the pronouncing dictionary served as indispensable resources to English language teachers although questions of the nature, function or structure of language received superficial attention in the design of teaching programmes. Subject specific courses, the nearest to teacher education courses, in the universities were generally oriented towards literary scholarship, a declarative knowledge of the formal properties of the specific language including philology, phonetics and grammar and fostered a command of the target language as a practical skill. "This defined the subject and if teachers possessed this knowledge, they were deemed to be equipped to transmit it" (Widdowson 1997: 122). This complied with the tradition of authoritative transmission of knowledge, the major driving assumption in pedagogy until recently.

In language teaching the main focus until about 1940 remained phonetics in spite of other developments in theoretical linguistics. Palmer, however, concerned with the need for research in order to rationalise pedagogical decisions, called for a more scientific analysis of language teaching. His seminal book *The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages* (1917) based on his own teaching experiences and lectures on methodology culminated the use of the direct or oral method. His *Principles of Language Study* (1921) provided authoritative guidance for language teachers with an emphasis on an applied phonetics philosophy. This was reflected too in the *Memorandum on the Teaching of Modern Languages* (I.A.A.M. 1929) which offered views on language teaching particularly on aspects of methodology and organisation.

Around the 1940s, the needs emerging from an escalating world war brought linguistics and in particular structural linguistics, into the classroom. The emphasis on structures and the focus on oral work subsequently paved the way for the audiolingual approach. Again the authoritative work of Fries (1945, 1957), Lado (1958) and Hornby (1959-1966) dominated language pedagogy. Teachers now had to develop new orientations

for language teaching, breaking up language into structural units and, driven by assumptions derived from behavioural psychology, proceeded to teach through patterned practice and drills. There were significant implications for SLTE which advocated atomistic training to master simple, mechanistic techniques that were practised in controlled doses in the classroom to promote learners' oral skills. Moreover, with technology being introduced in the classroom in the form of audio-visual aids, in particular the language laboratory (with its assumptions of the importance of materials other than just the textbook in illustrating the patterns of the new language), there were demands on teachers to extend their expertise. This positivist approach failed to incorporate learner diversity or teacher insights and according to Markee (1990) illustrates clearly the undesirability of a one-to-one relationship between research findings and practice.

Stevens (1963), aware of both the dangers of unprofessional reliance on intuition alone or too ready an acceptance of undiluted American structuralism, advocated the necessity of a theoretical basis for language pedagogy. He believed that teachers should acquire a sound background of linguistics and an updated description of the language to be taught. This can be considered a forerunner of the *applied linguistics* approach to language teaching and in a sense, a step towards a sense of professionalism. Halliday, McIntosh and Stevens (1964) and Mackay (1965) emphasised the relevance of linguistics to language pedagogy at about the time Rivers (1964) highlighted the relevance of psychology and the learning process. Both these books have been highly influential in second language teacher education.

This was followed by a period of major developments exemplified by Chomsky's (1965) theory of transformative generative grammar, Halliday's (1970, 1975) neo-Firthian approach towards a functional account of language use, and Hymes' (1972) notion of communicative competence. Although these have had significant influences on the nature of classroom language and methodology (see section 2.1.4), the strong influence of linguistics as a body of knowledge on language teaching and consequently on SLTE began to be viewed with caution. Thus Spolsky (1968) drew a distinction between *applications* (linguistic descriptions providing data for teaching materials) and *implications* (linguistic discussions about the nature of language providing insights into language pedagogy) and argued for the discipline to be called *educational linguistics*

(Spolsky 1978). Perhaps the most significant explication was made by Stevens in 1975 (published in Stevens 1980) when he argued for a much broader and dynamic base for applied linguistics, with multiple bases involving theory and practice, capable of “redefin[ing] itself afresh for each task” (Stevens 1980: 9) thus bestowing that essential element of *adaptability* to different contexts. This trend has been further developed through a continued bid to liberate language teaching from an intellectual subservience to linguistics with a clarification being made about the nature of *applied linguistics* as opposed to *linguistics applied* (Widdowson 1984a). The former professes to be broad-based and flexible, with the ability to be appropriated to suit the needs of pedagogy while the latter sees linguistic knowledge as impositional and rigid.

Freeman (1994) argues that instead of assuming that disciplinary knowledge like linguistics is isomorphic with teaching knowledge, a broader framework of knowledge from teaching contexts needs to be used for second language teaching and teacher education. However, with a less myopic vision of the nature of the contribution of linguistics developing today, Larsen-Freeman (1995) sees the role of linguistics as more circumscribed and a source for insights which are indispensable for language teachers as they construct their own understanding of teaching, learning and language. Nunan (1995), for example, has used linguistics as a knowledge base for interactively training teachers in the use of systemic-functional linguistics to analyse students’ factual writing and to develop pedagogical packages to improve students’ writing.

### **2.1.3 Psychology: theories of learning, language learning and SLA**

There have been basically two schools in the development of the theory of language learning, the *behaviourist* and *cognitivist* views with variations on each (Ellis 1994). These have at different times influenced opposing teaching methodology and materials. Particularly significant has been the *innatist* argument against behaviourist learning while a further theoretical position, the *interactionist* view has focused on linguistic environment interacting with innate capacities (Lightbown and Spada 1993).

*Second Language Acquisition* (SLA) research, recognised as a valuable field of enquiry for about 3 decades now with its goals of describing and explaining how learners acquire a second language, have contributed theories, explanations, positions and



perspectives that exist as complex multi-faceted phenomena which at times compete and overlap rather like “a many-sided prism” (Ellis 1994: 667). Consolidating the different models of L2 acquisition, Ellis (1994) presents a general framework where *input* is first *noticed*, then *comprehended*, then taken in as *intake* and, through a process of *implicit* and *explicit* knowledge, is produced as *output*. This is an on-going process as the output may be channelled as L2 input for further processing. Ellis (1997) currently calls it the “computational model”. Although a model of language acquisition, certain elements in it have implications for teacher education especially the element of *noticing* which can be interrelated to reflection and analysis as modes of promoting understanding in teacher development courses (see section 3.2.3). Particularly useful has been insights from Bialystok’s (1978) theory of an interface between *explicit* and *implicit* knowledge and underlying this, the element of *consciousness* in learning (Sharwood-Smith 1981). Schmidt (1990) argues that some degree of consciousness is necessary for *noticing* to take place in order to facilitate *intake* of *input*. Widely accepted by language pedagogues who have argued for consciousness-raising activities for learners to ‘notice’ language items (Ellis 1992, Fotos 1993, 1994, VanPatten 1996), these insights into learning may be applied to teacher education as well.<sup>22</sup>

Over the years, however, a general sense of discretion has developed about the difficulties of trying to fit theoretical constructs across disciplines. This is perhaps a reaction, for example, against a transfer of findings from behavioural psychology into audio-lingual structure drilling or the suggestion that the natural order of child language acquisition should become the grammatical syllabus for L2 learning (Krashen 1982), or that transformative grammatical theory may be applied to transformations in grammar teaching or cognitive teaching. In 1964, Carroll and Rivers separately expressed their concern over inadequate assumptions and narrow interpretations of the theory of learning. Hatch (1979) urged that ideas from SLA should be applied with caution. Whereas Pennycook (1994b) worries about “incommensurable discourses”, Schumann (1993), van Lier (1994a, 1997) and Block (1996) warn against dominant paradigms in SLA research (proposed by Beretta 1991 and Long 1993), arguing that inflexible theoretical models tend to distort the understanding of such a complex phenomenon as second language acquisition and learning. Larsen-Freeman (1997) suggests a

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<sup>22</sup> This is elaborated in chapter 7.

‘chaos/complexity theory’ approach (see Gleick 1987) which might provide the necessary flexibility to better understand the dynamics of complex, non-linear systems present in SLA and thus discourage reductionist explanations. Kachru (1994) and Sridhar (1994), on the other hand, have pointed out that the dominant theories and teaching methodologies as they exist today are based on models formulated from SLA research carried out in Anglocentric contexts, ignoring widely different contexts in the rest of the world. Ellis (1994), in tune with this current mood, suggests that SLA research results do not provide ‘facts’ but rather ‘insights’ which can illuminate understanding of language learning and contribute towards teachers’ building their own theory of teaching (see too, in the previous section, Spolsky’s distinction between *applications* and *implications* of linguistic knowledge to pedagogy).

Armed with a sense of discretion, not only has language pedagogy benefited from a number of principles drawn from cognitive psychology, psycholinguistics and SLA but the SLTE field itself has the potential of being enriched by some of these insights. For example, *psychology* has investigated *learner characteristics* viz. age, motivation, as well as cognitive, affective and personality traits (Skehan 1989, Crookes and Schmidt 1991, Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991). An account of the *cognitive/metacognitive* processes involved in learning, together with the conditions that allow for successful use of these learning processes in concepts such as *strategies, techniques and mental operations* have been explored (Wenden and Rubin 1987, O’Malley and Chamot 1990, Oxford 1990). Furthermore, the *theory of socio-cultural learning* proposed by Vygotsky (1978) where learning is seen not as an individual process but as occurring through instruction and social interaction in a participatory framework has reinforced concepts of *collaborative learning* in the teaching process (see Vygotsky and Bruner in Wood 1988). Besides, further work in developmental and cognitive psychology suggest the importance of emotional support when promoting complex thinking (Bidell and Fisher 1992, Case 1992). The picture that emerges is of a learner, not entirely at the mercy of instruction, but one with proactive mental processes and mechanisms which if supported and encouraged appropriately, has the potential for learning effectively. This may be extended to teacher education programmes as well (see chapter 7).

Further cognitive insights for SLTE may be drawn from the concept of *connectionism* (Eysenck 1990). Cognitive constructivists such as Sutton et al. (1996), drawing on

principles from constructivism and connectionism state that knowledge is constructed rather than stored and learning involves continuous active construction, connection and reconstruction of experiences. Applied to teacher education, it strengthens the assumption that student teachers invent and construct knowledge based on their prior experiences and learning. Therefore ways may be sought to understand pre-service teachers' epistemological beliefs and how these beliefs might affect their classroom behaviours and their development as teachers (see sections 2.2.1, 3.4.3). *Developmental contextualists* have reconceptualised the view of cognition as being no longer 'in the head' but rather at an intersection between the mind and the context (Bidell and Fisher 1992). This has prompted research into exploring the relationship between context and cognitive performance (Ceci and Roazzi 1994). This links into findings from the diffusion-of innovation (see section 2.1.7) and the ethnographic research traditions (see section 5.2) prompting teacher educators to seek ways of using 'context' as an essential variable in the understanding of teacher action and classroom processes. These then provide a theoretical basis for promoting cognitively and contextually oriented approaches in teacher development programmes.

#### **2.1.4 Sociolinguistics and the ethnography of speech**

By the end of the sixties linguists had begun to stress the creative and the functional potential of language. They drew on the work of the functional linguists Firth (1957) and Halliday (1973, 1975), the discourse analysis work of the sociolinguists, notably Gumperz and Hymes (1972), Labov (1972), as well as that of the speech act theorists, Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). This focus on the ethnography of communication with its orientation towards socio-cultural norms and values resulted in recognition of the language of the *user* as opposed to that of the *analyst*. This opened up variations on the communicative and competence aspects of language use culminating in the communicative approach to language teaching with its underlying principles that claimed to address the conditions needed to promote second language learning (for earlier stages of communicative language teaching, see Widdowson 1978, Brumfit and Johnson 1979, Littlewood 1981, Johnson 1982, Brumfit 1986).

This trend may be traced to the insights of linguists-cum-practitioners (Widdowson, Candlin and Breen among others) who, aware of the demands of pedagogy running

ahead of linguistic theory, attempted to forge a link between formal and functional linguistics. They argued for a more balanced relationship between linguistic theory and language pedagogy advocating the reciprocal nature of pedagogy and linguistics and the possibility as well as the desirability of one informing the other (Widdowson 1979a, 1984a). Meanwhile changing economic and educational realities in Europe led to the formulation of the threshold level for adult learners of modern languages (van Ek 1975). In addition, instead of the hitherto grammatical categories, Wilkins (1976) proposed a functional definition of language for pedagogic purposes and presented language in two categories—*notions* and *functions*—to be applied through his notional-functional approach. This led to a new orientation to language teacher education, giving primacy to teachers' roles, denying the authority of imposed theory and recognising the validity of ideas generated from practical experience.

This ushering in of the communicative approach for a time tended to take the teaching scene by storm particularly in respect to theoretical assumptions underlying curriculum development which in turn were reflected in syllabus, materials design and classroom methodology. Language skills development, stress on meaning and an emphasis on task with a focus on fluency were the hallmarks of this approach. Over the last decade, however, there has been a reassessment of the communicative orientation to language teaching (Swan 1985, Thompson 1996). As a result, there has arisen a caution about classroom procedures that purport to follow this approach. The need for a more thoughtful response to CLT has arisen for a number of reasons: a recognition of the importance of integrating form and function to suit learner needs, instructional resources and above all, an awareness of the issue of compatibility to local conditions. This has evoked conciliatory responses. Holliday (1994a) and Ellis (1996), for example, advocate the development of a culturally sensitive communicative approach to ELT. Significant among the changing trends in CLT is the gradual comeback of grammar teaching, although it may be argued that in the majority of classrooms worldwide grammar had always held sway. Nevertheless present preferences in mainstream CLT practice are for grammar to be presented through a mixture of explicit and implicit teaching within a process-product perspective (Green and Hecht 1992, Batstone 1994, Fotos 1994, Bygate et al 1994, and Nunan 1998). It is interesting to note that Breen and Candlin (1980) had proposed, two decades ago, that effective teaching must attend to both the *process* and the *product* of teaching and learning.

Moreover, in terms of the English language, a move towards a discourse of worldliness (Pennycook 1994a) and a growing perception of the necessity of acknowledging the sociolinguistic reality of non-native varieties of English, particularly institutionlised varieties like Indian, Singaporean or Nigerian English (Kachru 1985, 1986a) has had important implications for ELT and ELTE as it has opened up a whole range of issues, especially that of communication and intelligibility across the ever expanding communities of non-native English language users (Jenkins 1996, 1998). In addition, the recent focus on context and culture which proposes to analyse classroom behaviour in relation to the wider society has encouraged awareness of cultural practices as being crucial to understanding learner-teacher behaviour in second language classrooms (Harrison 1990, Coleman 1996a, Bailey and Nunan 1996 – see sections 2.1.6 and 2.2.3). Locastro (1996) warns about borrowing terms regarding curriculum design from one sociocultural context (e.g. the term *communicative*) for mapping onto indigenous concepts in another context as it may result in semantic mismatches, as illustrated in a Japanese ELT curriculum document. This is also evident in the curriculum documents used in Bangladesh where pedagogic jargon on communicative language teaching is used indiscriminately without much awareness of the communicative concept.

Nevertheless, it is widely accepted that the communicative approach to language teaching has had a significant influence on assumptions underlying teacher education. There has been an emphasis on a more versatile role for the language teacher who is no longer seen as a mere provider of rules and knowledge but rather as a catalyst to encourage the learning process. Indeed a highly dynamic role is envisaged for the teacher. Therefore to prepare the teacher for the communicative classroom, teacher education has drawn on much of the classroom ethos associated with the communicative approach, such as the *humanistic perspective* (Stevick 1990), a *learner-centred negotiated learning* (Candlin 1987) and the *process-oriented perspective* (Breen 1984). This is evident not only in the revision of traditional assumptions underlying the philosophy of education as an interventionist phenomenon itself but in its short-term manifestation of the preference being manifest in SLTE schemes for a task-based, analytic mode to develop reflective practices in teacher development courses (see section 3.2.3). In addition, arguments are forwarded for SLTE to include a broader background to enable prospective second language teachers to understand

communicative competence in all its complexity and to respond with appropriate pedagogies to learner variety, contexts and purposes (Celce-Murcia 1995). However, the question again arises whether this assumption is universally applicable and if so, whether it is appropriately implemented. As discussed in section 3.3 *passim*, the rhetoric often tends to belie reality.

#### **2.1.5 Education and language teaching**

Language teaching and SLTE both occur in educational settings and fit into curriculum design, yet *education*, as a discipline in relation to language teaching, has been least recognised in the past. Interestingly enough the history of language teaching has been for the most part isolated from curriculum studies (White 1988). Although on the one hand, language pedagogy has in many respects been subject to the same influences of educational thought (psychology, testing, educational reform movements) as other curriculum subjects, on the other hand, it seems to have developed out of an applied linguistics tradition especially in terms of its unique influences from phonetics and theoretical linguistics. The isolation of language pedagogy is particularly evident from the fact that whereas in the sixties, general educational thought was emphasising creativeness and individuality among learners and rejecting mechanical and authoritarian modes of teaching, language pedagogy was following its own agenda with its linguistic and psychological theories and modes of drilling and habit formation (Stern 1983a).

ELT in particular appeared to have developed in the private language school sector (Holliday's BANA ideology – see section 2.1.6) with its independent organisational structures, methodological autonomy and client-centred approaches without affiliation to mainstream education. Moreover, most of its influential activities were carried out overseas as English became increasingly prominent as a world language. It is also interesting to note that, with the demand for ESL teachers in the sixties, formal teacher preparation programmes were offered in departments of Linguistics and only since the mid-eighties has there been a shift towards accrediting EFL/ESL teacher education programmes in the discipline of Education. Hence the long-used term 'applied Linguistics' as a superordinate nomenclature for SLTE post-graduate courses has only recently made way for a variation on the terms *Language(s)* and *Education*. Thus

although the field has taken on isolated ideas from education from time to time, it has taken nearly four decades for SLTE, and particularly ELTE to establish its rightful link with *education*, the domain with which it is ideologically most closely linked.

Education is a diverse and complex field of enquiry. As a professional calling, it draws on multi-disciplinary sources and as a discipline, divides into a number of sub-disciplines which can have direct bearing on many facets of language teaching and language teacher education. Since the sixties, language pedagogues have been drawing on ideas from curriculum theory (the schemes formulated by Mackay 1965 and Halliday et al. 1964 are perhaps the earliest elaborate attempts at designing foreign language curriculum). Freeman and Richards (1996) regret that the link of language teaching with the academic traditions are made for the sake of professional identity only, rather than an enquiry-driven understanding of what needs to be known.

The possible relevance of most of the sub-disciplines of education to language pedagogy is worth investigating. For instance, a *philosophy of education* perspective can enrich conceptual analysis, help to clarify unstated assumptions and promote a dispassionate discussion of values. Peters (1963), for example, has subjected the ends-means model to scrutiny in mainstream education which has implications for language teaching. *Educational sociology* can enlighten language pedagogy by increasing awareness of the existing social structure and the role or perception of languages in society (Bernstein 1971a, 1971b, 1973). The *economics of education* is of particular value to developing countries in deciding on the distribution of limited resources and the extent of the benefits of teaching a particular foreign language and its investment in ELT and SLTE. Likewise, *educational administration, organisation and planning* and the field of *comparative education* can only assist in promoting a better understanding of the processes involved both in planning and management of language teaching and SLTE programmes. An example of the relevance of educational thinking has been revealed in the application of ideas from the seminal work of Schön (1983, 1987) particularly in the concept of the reflective practitioner (see sections 3.2.3, 3.4.3). Research findings in mainstream teacher education too have been opening up sources of insights (Wittrock 1986, Houston 1990, Sikula et al. 1996). There is thus ample justification to encourage the development of a robust relationship between the principles of language teaching and teacher education with those of mainstream

educational thought. Indeed there is a growing lobby (started by Spolsky, 1978) for linguists and educators to unify within the academic discourse of *Educational Linguistics*, a field with its own professional identity (see also van Lier 1994b).

#### **2.1.6 The issue of context and culture**

The notion of a unified teaching methodology in language pedagogy is increasingly becoming dysfunctional with a growing recognition of widely differing educational and social practices. Whereas Bernstein (1971a) has presented the distinctions between the *collectionist/integrationist* and the *professional/academic* paradigms, Cortazzi (1990) and Cortazzi and Jin (1996a, 1996b) have linked educational ideologies to national cultures. Three cultural value systems have been identified, *classical humanism*, *reconstructionism*, and *progressivism* (see Clark 1987, section 1.3.2) which call for different educational ideologies and thus lead to different approaches to curriculum design and consequently, to different teaching materials and methodology. White (1988) maintains no curriculum or teaching decision anywhere is value-neutral. For instance, a value system which is authoritarian upholds moral values and conserves national unity and identity and nurtures a transmission view of knowledge in the curriculum which is teacher-directed and is content-driven (see section 1.3.4). Such a value system obviously strikes a discordant note with a process-oriented, heuristic learning perspective.

This has significant implications for the transfer of teaching technology regarding ELT and English language teacher education from the Anglocentric centre to non-native EFL/ESL learning contexts. The mismatch has been illustrated by Phillipson (1992a) who speaks of cultural imperialism at the macro-level and Holliday (1994a, 1994b) who taking his cue from Bernstein, speaks of cultural imperialism at the micro-level by presenting what he calls the BANA-TESEP divide in ELT. According to Holliday (1994b: 4), BANA (originating in Britain, Australasia, and North America) is an instrumentally-oriented ELT model based on the private language school ethos which has considerable freedom to develop classroom methodology to suit the needs of particular markets while TESEP (tertiary, secondary and primary English language education in the rest of the world) is an institutionally-influenced ELT model which is part of a wider curriculum and is thus influenced or constrained by wider institutional,



educational and community forces. The BANA model, considered the ‘learning group ideal’, has influenced ELT discourse worldwide in relation to practice, materials and methodology. Furthermore, in terms of the BANA ideal, TESEP behaviour tends to be seen as deviant and problematic.

However, with the disenchantment of the postivist orientation and the corresponding rise of the naturalist-constructivist approach to knowledge with its recognition of multiple realities (see section 5.2), a body of work has attempted to reinterpret historical processes and to look afresh at ‘other’ cultures (see Phillipson 1992a, Said 1993). It has influenced a growing recognition of variations in contexts highlighting the issue of culture in second language learning and teaching (Valdes 1986, Widdowson 1987a, 1992, Harrison 1990, Kramsch 1993, 1995, 1998, Holliday 1994a, 1996). Indeed the psychological process of language acquisition itself is considered susceptible to changes in context (Block 1996). These social and psychological orientations interacting in a complex manner have prompted Breen (1985) to perceive second language classrooms as ‘coral gardens’ and Cazden (1988) to talk of imbedded systems in the school culture. In this light, Larsen-Freeman (1990) and Freeman (1994) have argued for a broader knowledge base to acknowledge not only teacher’s existing practices and thinking processes but the context as well. Such perceptions have lately prompted ethnographic studies that purport to describe and interpret teacher and learner behaviour and classroom processes from the standpoint of context and the wider culture (see Bailey and Nunan 1996, Freeman and Richards 1996, Coleman 1996a) and on that basis, there is a growing argument for a revised philosophy of pedagogy (Oxford 1994, Kramsch and Sullivan 1996).

The concern for culture within ELT has come to be seen in one of two ways. The first relates to the question of the teaching of culture along with the target language and whether it should be taught and the manner in which it should be taught with its corresponding implications for course content and materials design. This is outside the scope of my investigation. The second, which informs my study, is the influence of societal and ideological beliefs on the learning behaviour of students (both language learners and trainee-teachers). In this latter sense it is important to recognise the notion of context and culture within the domain of ELT and SLTE in developing countries.

The word ‘culture’ has assumed several layers of definition particularly in relationship with language and communication (see Kramsch 1998) but, in its traditional sense, culture is seen as the social milieu that provides a group with a shared construction of reality, a tradition and a recipe for action (Berry et al. 1992). The rules of culture are transmitted through a learning process, either tacit or conscious. As Kramsch (1998: 4) puts it, “Culture refers to what has been grown and groomed”. However, to appreciate culture in its varied manifestations, its multi-faceted complexity has to be taken into account. Thus it is important to understand that it pertains to groups of different sizes. Also cultures are not mutually exclusive but overlap and contain or are contained by other cultures (Lutz 1981). Thus relations between cultures can be both vertical through hierarchies of cultures and subcultures or horizontal between cultures of different systems. This is particularly significant to understand ‘roles’ of participants in specific contexts (Wright 1987). Furthermore, sociologists such as Murphy (1986) maintain that cultures are by no means static entities. They change, constantly feeding on influences from other cultures. Within this multi-faceted perspective, Holliday (1994b) warns against dealing with the concept of culture in ELT as a regional construct but to understand the identity and behaviour of students and teachers in terms of a whole complex of interlocking and overlapping cultural influences (some of which may be regional) and argues for a methodology to accommodate the culture that students (and, for my purpose, trainee-teachers) bring to the classroom.

#### **2.1.7 The management of innovation and change**

In second or foreign language teaching and in ELT in particular, any qualitative change in pedagogical materials, approaches and values may be considered innovation. Of course as Fullan (1993) points out, what counts as innovation depends on the users’ subjective perceptions of ‘newness’ rather than on any objective criteria. For example introducing ‘group work’ among learners in the language class would be considered an innovation in Bangladesh whereas it is common practice in most Anglocentric classrooms. In concert with the rise of the communicative approach, much innovative work over the last two or three decades throughout the developing world have been concerned with bringing about curricular changes in syllabus design, classroom methodology, course books, testing and assessment, and more significantly in training

and developing teachers since teachers are seen as the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement.

An earlier focus on the *logistic* concept of the change process derived primarily from ‘managerial and systems’ models working on the assumption that non-implementation was an essentially technical and temporary phenomenon and could be surmounted by addressing resources and incentive systems in organisations, is increasingly being seen as a *deficient* model of implementing change because it ignores as critical determinants the nature of the innovation as well as the context in which the innovation is to be used.

An alternative and a more recent viewpoint is the *diffusion-of-innovations* perspective (Rogers 1983). This approach, based on research on the implementation of innovation, draws on ideas from a variety of disciplines including anthropology, sociology, management and development planning. It views users as rational decision-makers coping with a number of factors which can limit successful implementation. These factors can operate at different levels – the individual level, school level, system level – all socio-cultural in nature. And therefore, though the source of the innovation comes from opinion leaders in the concerned discipline, the diffusion of innovation is often a social process, not just a technical matter.

There is a well-established tradition of innovation research and practice in mainstream education as exemplified in the works of Miles (1964), Brown and McIntyre (1978), Fullan (1982, 1993), Rogers (1983, 1995), Nicholls (1983), Rudduck (1991), and Fullan and Hargreaves (1992). Models of ‘how’ change occurs have been provided by Havelock (1971) and by social scientists Chin and Benne (1976) with particular insights into mismatches arising from dissimilar ideologies presented by the three cultures concerned – that of education, the organisation within which change is envisaged, and the change process itself.

In the area of second language teaching, almost two decades ago, Swales (1980) and Bowers (1980) drew attention to the importance of recognising the intricacies of socio-cultural variables in the local environment, and Holliday and Cooke (1982) spoke of ‘an ecological approach to ESP’ proposing that local features be seen as legitimate *factors* rather than *constraints* in implementing programmes. Nevertheless, the history

of ELT innovation is strewn with inadequacies and failures as teachers have often resisted efforts to change them (Wagner 1991, Stoller 1994) or learners have rejected new methodologies introduced in class (Canagarajah 1993, Karavas-Doukas 1995, Shamim 1996). These appear to confirm Fullan's claim (Fullan 1989 cited in Markee 1997) that all conscious strategies of innovation developed in the field of education have failed to fully achieve their desired goals. Such a statement serves to highlight the complexity and uncertainty of the innovation process.

Only recently have ELT developers been seriously drawing upon insights from the 'diffusion-of-innovation' findings and ethnographic studies. Kennedy (1987, 1988) and Beretta (1990) emphasise the importance of accounting for hidden agendas of participants in language teaching and teacher development projects. Kennedy (1988) suggests a diffusionist perspective can provide a coherent set of guiding principles for the development and implementation of programmes. He advocates the acceptance and understanding of a hierarchy of interrelated social subsystems in which to operate. Furthermore, this supplies evaluators with criteria for retrospective evaluation of the extent to which these innovations have actually been implemented. Markee (1993, 1997) states that approaches based on this perspective will help to focus on the degree to which language teachers do actually reconstruct their pedagogical values. Somekh (1993), O'Hanlon (1996) and McDonough and McDonough (1997) propose drawing teachers into the change process through localised action research (see section 2.2.4).

However, in line with current trends in critical thinking, questions have arisen regarding the issue of ELT innovations originating only from Anglocentric regions. White (1993) points to a general lack of perspective that fails to challenge assumptions behind innovative efforts, notably the covert exercise of power and control by interested parties. The issue of power and inequality perpetuated through language education has been raised by Tollefson (1995) and Pattanayak (1996). Pennycook (1989) believes that certain trends in language pedagogy such as the methods popularity or "methodological dogmatism" (Reid 1995: 3) serve a range of political, academic and commercial interests. Indeed Phillipson (1992a, 1992b) sees the centre-periphery relationship within ELT development programmes as hegemonic.

In spite of these dissenting voices, ELT innovation-flow from the Anglocentric nerve centre remains unabated and is, in effect, currently being managed through huge aided projects. In terms of ELT project management, Holliday (1990, 1992, 1994a, 1995, 1996) calls for an ethnographic approach to understand the centre-periphery ideological divide so as to cope with mismatches with regard to intercultural and interpersonal issues. He argues for a 'soft' systems approach to perceive the real-world complexity of human organisations by developing a 'sociological imagination', a term used by Mills (1959), to enable developers to integrate into 'local rhythms' of work during curriculum development. Stephenson (1994) proposes a 'bottom up' participatory approach to ELT project management where participation and a sense of ownership by local teachers are seen as vital (see also Nunan 1989a, Tomlinson 1990). Palmer (1993) maintains that teachers experience, reflect, adapt and evaluate the innovation in the light of their own experience. Thus the emphasis is currently on treating innovation as cultural change perceived from the users' viewpoint.<sup>23</sup> This perspective has particular implications for managing ELT curricular change in developing contexts. The diffusionist and ethnographic perspectives presented here informs my study of teacher perceptions of classroom procedures (see chapters 6 and 7).

Having discussed so far the developments and directions that have influenced issues surrounding second/foreign language teaching and SLTE from a multidisciplinary perspective and arguing for a broader knowledge base to address the complexities of language teacher education particularly in diversified contexts, I now focus on the varied perceptions that have been held about the teacher during the last three decades.

## **2.2 The focus on the teacher**

Models of curriculum development usually tend to be linear in essence beginning in the sphere of theory and proceeding as an outcome in the field of practice as illustrated, for example, in the Tyler model (Tyler 1949). Despite the variations in the models, Elbaz (1983) maintains:

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<sup>23</sup> Politically correct language, too, is being chosen in innovation projects now. Instead of the 'Madras snowball' (Smith 1962), metaphors like 'the cascade effect' (Holliday 1995) are being used.

This pattern specifies that one party (the developer), usually prompted by the second party (the evaluator), writes objectives and prepares materials for a third party (the student) which, almost by the way, are to be enacted by a fourth party—the teacher.  
(Elbaz 1983: 7)

This traditional view of the teacher's role as an instrument in the curriculum process is simplistic and seriously inadequate considering the fact that teachers are the persons who translate educational concepts into practice and embody the curriculum in classroom events. Elbaz (1983) further points out that this simplistic view serves the developer well as any difficulties impeding the implementation process can be attributed to the teacher's personal failings. This is a contradiction in so far as the teacher is denied an active role in the creation of the instructional arrangements but are held responsible for any failure. This is suggestive of a blind spot in curriculum development models and only serves to disenfranchise teachers in a diminished sense of ownership of their craft (Goodman 1988).

In recent times, this technologically-oriented linear view of curriculum development has come under attack. In mainstream education, during the seventies, there was a reassessment of the extreme perspective of 'teacher-proof curricula' with a subsequent concern for involving teachers in local curriculum development. Stenhouse (1975) advocated that curriculum development and teacher development were indivisible. However, the principle has remained the same: the teacher's contribution is still viewed as dependent on the intentions of the curriculum developer. Widdowson (1993) states that unlike the autonomy proposed for negotiated learning in classrooms (see Candlin and Edelhoff 1982, Candlin 1987), a similar autonomy is denied teachers in their dealings with others in the larger system with regard to decisions about course design, choice of materials, and the consumption of knowledge obtained from research.

Furthermore, the very idea of teacher-based curriculum development again fits the linear model as it endorses an imposed belief in the benefit of this practice. On the other hand, there has been little evidence of success in this regard as teachers have often resisted efforts to give them new roles (Fullan 1982, 1993, Rogers 1995). Therefore although the desirability for intensified teacher involvement has been articulated, the practicalities remain complex. As a result, buzzwords like *collaboration*

and *partnership* are currently being bandied around in the educational world with Hargreaves and Fullan (1992: 16) forwarding a cautionary note on the need to beware of “contrived collegiality”. One thing, however, has been established without doubt – there is no such thing as a teacher-proof curriculum as teachers are increasingly being seen as crucial to the interpretation of the curriculum and an ultimate key to educational change and school improvement (Widdowson 1993, Barone et al. 1996).

### **2.2.1 Teacher cognition**

Confronted with the dysfunctionality of approaching the teacher as an instrument for intended outcomes, curriculum developers have started to recognise and take into account the intricate and complex nature of teacher thinking. This has prompted mainstream educational research to recognise what is variously termed *teacher thinking*, *teacher perceptions*, *teacher cognition*, and to undertake inquiry into different aspects of teacher thinking and teacher knowledge (Calderhead 1981, 1987, 1988, Elbaz 1983, Clark and Peterson 1986). Kagan (1990: 419) sees *teacher cognition* as (a) teachers’ self-reflection, beliefs and knowledge about teaching, students and content, and (b) an awareness of problem-solving strategies common to classroom teaching including planning and preactive and interactive thoughts and decisions.

This interest into the psychological context of teaching has been influenced by two theories from developmental and cognitive psychology (discussed in section 2.1.3). One is *constructivism* that upholds the belief that individuals construct knowledge through continuous and active construction and reconstruction of experiences, and because the nature of this construction depends on prior experiences and existing knowledge, learning is therefore individual. The other is a recent reconceptualisation of the theory of *cognition* by *developmental contextualists* which views cognition as an intersection between the mind and the context thus establishing a relationship between context and cognitive performance i.e. there can be no decontextualised cognition.

According to Clark and Peterson (1986), the newness of this field is indicated by the fact that most work has been undertaken since 1976. However, mention must be made of Jackson’s seminal work, *Life in Classrooms* in 1968, which attempted to describe and understand mental constructs and processes that underlie teacher behaviour. He

called upon the educational research community to recognise this “hidden” aspect of teaching as a means to a fuller understanding of classroom processes. Clark and Peterson (1986) have identified three areas of research in this field: first, the contents of teacher thoughts and their cognitive processes; second, teachers’ judgements and decisions; and third, the domains of teacher knowledge i.e. the diverse kinds of knowledge teachers draw upon to do their work. As regards the domain of teacher knowledge, Elbaz (1983) focuses on the *practical knowledge* of teachers which works from an assumption that teachers hold a complex, practically oriented set of understandings which they use actively to shape and direct the work of teaching (Shavelson and Stern 1981). Although research has not been able to gauge extensively teachers’ knowledge as yet, researchers have sought to provide representations of isolated chunks, using concepts from codified knowledge (Mitchell and Marland 1989). But it is generally agreed that teachers have special skills and personal qualities that they require day after day to carry out their work and it is becoming increasingly important to see and understand the situation from teachers’ own perspectives (Calderhead 1987, Houston 1990, Sikula et al. 1996).

Although cognitive processes have been acknowledged in applied linguistics and in second language pedagogy (as evident from the literature on cognitive learning strategies and affective processes), interest in the cognitive processes of *second language teachers* is relatively new. Larsen-Freeman (1990) called for research into teacher thinking to contribute to a theory of teaching, essential for SLTE. It is being gradually recognised that in terms of classroom practice, language teachers’ thinking and decision-making processes need to be understood fully (Freeman 1989, 1994, Richards 1990a, 1990b 1998, Johnson 1992, Freeman and Richards 1993, Woods 1996). Bailey (1995) reports that there is currently an emerging body of L2 research which is addressing this concern as in the work of Nunan 1992, Johnson 1992, Freeman and Richards 1996, Bailey and Nunan 1996. Freeman (1996a, 1998) advocates that to understand teacher education, one must understand not only teacher thinking processes but also examine *how* that thinking is learned, as exemplified in Almarza’s (1996) study. These are revealing interesting perceptions with regard to teacher cognition but undoubtedly a great deal more exploration and enquiry are necessary in this domain.



Related to the issue of cognition is the recognition of student-teachers' *prior* perceptions and beliefs which is gaining ground in SLTE (see Wallace 1991). There is a growing awareness of the desirability of its interaction with established forms of knowledge provided in teacher education courses (see section 3.4.3). It is interesting to note that similar views had been voiced much earlier on by Larsen-Freeman who spoke of the "transformation of accumulative knowledge because students come with some pertinent knowledge and this knowledge must be recognised and worked with" (Larsen-Freeman 1983: 267). It may be pointed out here that apart from the impact from teacher-thinking research, a significant influence has been the concept of the 'reflective practitioner' as elucidated by Schön (1987), which has incorporated *teacher thinking* into the current advocacy towards *reflection* by trainee-teachers in mainstream teacher education (Calderhead 1989, Calderhead and Gates 1993). This has been elaborated in the domain of SLTE by Wallace (1991), Richards and Lockhart (1996) and Richards (1998) – see sections 3.2.3, 3.4.3.

Finally, recognising teacher perceptions and thinking processes goes against the grain of a universal concept of ELT methodology. In terms of the appropriateness of the communicative approach to specific conditions prevalent in English language classrooms around the world, Holliday (1994a) emphasises teachers' thinking and experience of local conditions must be capitalised upon and incorporated into a more environment-sensitive communicative approach to ELT. Prabhu (1992, 1995) stresses teachers' sense of plausibility about teaching and learning as representing what they believe. He maintains it is a crucial element and teaching can be of value only if the teacher's sense of plausibility is active and engaged. This issue of recognising teacher cognition is particularly pertinent to my thesis.

### **2.2.2 Native-speaker versus non-native speaker teacher**

An impact of an increased recognition of language teachers' thinking, perspectives and experiences has been apparent over the last decade in a particular area of ELT. It has resulted in the decline of the importance given to the *linguistic proficiency* of the teacher that had been instrumental in creating the *native speaker – non-native speaker* dichotomy in the language teaching profession. The concept of the native-speaker, originating as a common-sense idea in a monolingual society, became central to the

interests and concerns of linguistics and in the early sixties appeared as the relevant example of a natural phenomenon for scientific study (Katz and Fodor 1962). It has had constant appeal in the domain of applied linguistics in its search for models, norms and goals and in sociolinguistic terms even led to the growth of power relations. But more recent interpretations of the complex issues around this notion have pointed towards a growing difficulty in defining this term. As Davies (1991: 81) states, “The native speaker remains like a unicorn, inspirational but always a mirage as we get near”.

There has been a corresponding realisation that the conceptual distinction between native-speakers and non-native speakers within applied linguistics itself is no longer tenable (see Ferguson 1983, Kachru 1983, 1985, Paikaday 1985, Cheshire 1991, Davies 1991, 1995). Indeed Davies (1991) argues, following Halliday (1978), that it is possible—albeit difficult—for a non-native speaker to become a native-speaker of a target language arguing that the distinction, like all majority-minority power relations, is, at bottom, one of confidence and identity i.e. if a non-native speaker has confidence in her/his ability to operate in the target language and is willing to identify with the target group, s/he is, by all rights, a native-speaker (Davies 1991: 66-7). Davies (1995) further advocates that for the purposes of language teaching it is crucial to be able to define ‘partial proficiency’, a concept which can delineate the goals of learning. The native-speaker might be a model but is useless as a measure. Furthermore, in the light of recent cultural and linguistic demographic patterns where Anand (1994) and Bisong (1995), for example, support recognising a multilingual, pluricultural society in place of a monolingual, monocultural one, the concept of a native-speaker appears redundant.

Though the native/non-native divide in applied linguistics has been controversial for nearly a quarter century now, it has had a strangely potent hold on the ELT profession where native speakers of English are assumed to be automatically superior by dint of language competence. Native speaker teachers are usually preferred, sadly enough not only by employers but occasionally by learners too (Medgyes 1992, Consolo 1994). And so there have been numerous instances of teaching by “backpacking expatriates with near zero qualifications in developing countries” (Maley 1992: 97). Indeed Phillipson (1992b: 14) argues untrained and unqualified native speaker teachers of English are “potentially a menace” because of their ignorance of the structure of the mother tongue and their resultant deficiency in metalinguistic awareness.

These two trends—a reappraisal of the concept of the native speaker in applied linguistics and an endorsement of teacher qualifications, learning perspectives and the advantage of sharing the learners’ language—have raised questions about the undue deference for the native speaker as the model teacher on grounds of being a *language user* alone. Together with the current recognition of *pedagogic competence* along with such variables as *experiential knowledge* of second language learning and *insider knowledge* of local environments, it has led to the reassessment of the status of the non-native speaker teacher who now emerges in a more favourable light (see Rampton 1990, Medgyes 1992, 1994, Phillipson 1992a, 1992b, Widdowson 1992, 1993, 1994). Rampton (1990: 99) argues that what is important is not “who you are but what you know”. Research too points towards the non-native speaker as being placed in an advantageous position. Prodomou (1992), for example, reports a survey finding where Greek students, having been on a course with native speaker English teachers, felt that a knowledge of the first language among their teachers would have been helpful.

Medgyes, a non-native speaker himself, has presented strong arguments in favour of the non-native speaking ELT teacher. He maintains that in spite of linguistic deficiencies, the non-native speaker teacher has an equal, if not better, chance of success. Medgyes (1992: 346-47) presents six assumptions underlying the advantages of non-native speaking teachers who belong to the same linguistic community as the learner (see too Phillipson 1992b: 15 for arguments along the same lines). By dint of having taken the same route to learning the language as their learners, non-native teachers are *more able to*:

- ◆ provide a good *learner model* (as opposed to a *user model*) for imitation,
- ◆ teach effective language learning strategies (having adopted strategies themselves),
- ◆ supply learners with information about the English language (having been made aware during their own learning process),
- ◆ anticipate and prevent their language difficulties (having encountered difficulties themselves),
- ◆ show empathy to the needs and problems of learners, and
- ◆ benefit from the shared mother tongue.

This is of particular value for the simple reason that the vast majority of second/foreign language teachers all over the world are non-native speakers of the language they teach. It is thus an imperative on SLTE provisions to facilitate the development of this huge body of non-native speaking teachers to operate effectively in their respective contexts.

In this connection I bring up two issues that need to be given serious consideration in SLTE. First, as pointed out earlier, there may be something specific about *non-native second language teachers in developing contexts* that might warrant special consideration in SLTE programmes (see section 2). This has to be kept in mind. Liu (1998) presents a similar case when he states that TESOL teacher education programmes in the USA suffer from a sense of ethnocentrism which neglects the special needs of non-native student-teachers from other countries. Secondly, the need for a minimum standard of proficiency in the target language of non-native teachers cannot be underestimated and therefore there is a need for a component to cater for this in any non-native speaker SLTE course (see Berry 1990, Cullen 1994, Murdoch 1994).

### **2.2.3 The teacher as the focus of research**

A general assumption in education has been that to advance knowledge about teaching and teacher education, classroom performance “where the action actually is” had to be observed (Dunkin and Biddle 1974: 13). However, dealing with observable aspects as being the focus of research has not lead to expected results. This is apparent from the process-product studies in general education focusing on what the teacher *did* and its influence on learning *outcomes*, rather than what the teacher *was*, including other issues. Nevertheless, the behaviour of ‘effective’ teachers and a relationship between teacher behaviour and student learning were analysed and incorporated into the knowledge base for teacher education courses (Joyce and Weil 1972, Zumwalt 1982).

In mainstream education, teachers and their roles have been researched along three perspectives.<sup>24</sup> These are perspectives:

- i. of the teacher as operating within the curriculum development process,
- ii. of the characteristics of the teacher,

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<sup>24</sup> Research findings within these perspectives have been variously discussed throughout chapters 2 & 3.

iii. of the teacher's knowledge.

Usually seen within the first perspective—as an instrument for the implementation of intended outcomes under the dictates of the curriculum developer (as pointed out earlier)—the teacher has been viewed in a somewhat fragmented way in terms of isolated characteristics and interpreted as passive, dependent and often unsuccessful. As such, teacher failings have been diagnosed and improvements prescribed. In thus viewing the teacher as an empirical construct, crucial issues have been marginalised such as, the value of experiential knowledge which teachers possess (Elbaz 1983), as well as their perspectives (Wittrock 1986, Calderhead 1987, 1990).

So along with an increased awareness of the complexity of the teaching phenomenon since the early 70s, there has been a growing appreciation that teacher behaviour is thought-related, mediated by teachers' psychological and ecological contexts. Jackson's (1968) work which articulated the complexity of the teacher's task and proposed that a *learning* theory did not necessarily equate with a *teaching* theory, is widely cited as the turning point on which subsequent research is based. It is the first significant study of teachers' thinking about their professional activity.

The complexity of a teacher's work extends beyond the fact that he is concerned with a complex organism, working towards complex goals, in a complex setting. He also, in most instances, is working with a *group* of students. The social character of the classroom adds yet another dimension to the teacher's work and further accounts for limited reliance on learning theory when seeking pedagogical advice.  
(Jackson 1968: 161)

Since then there have been an increasing number of educational studies within the second and third perspectives, indicating that teachers play an intricate role in the curriculum development process, and that their perspectives and decisions are important for this purpose (Wittrock 1986, Calderhead 1987, Houston 1990, Sikula et al. 1996). Additionally there has been a focus on teachers' professional learning (Calderhead 1990), professional judgement (Tripp 1993), the knowledge base within which teachers operate (Shulman 1987), and the developmental processes of trainee-teachers in teacher preparation programmes (Russel 1988, Johnson 1992). Additionally, case studies of professional development and teachers' narratives and biographies have

provided insights into their perceptions of curricula (Connelly and Clandinin 1988, Shulman 1990, Goodson 1992).

In second language pedagogy, teachers have been researched primarily within the first perspective. Influenced by a rationalist orientation, classroom research saw the teacher as curriculum implementor. In this process-product tradition, teachers were treated as subjects and a source of data, their actions recorded through various observation schemes designed for the purpose and teaching practices and learning outcomes analysed. Although claiming to be *classroom* observation and research, it is interesting to note that many of the studies were carried out in *simulated* classrooms. Nunan (1992) reports that out of a survey of 50 studies, only 15 were carried out in genuine classrooms while a further 7 used partial data from real classrooms. Nevertheless the findings were used as an empirical basis for developing frames of references for teacher training purposes (Long 1980, 1985, Long and Crookes 1986, Pica et al. 1987). The focus of process-product research of the time may be summed up in the words of Long (1984: 410), “A causal relationship must be established between program X and ESL”.

However, later analyses have shown these studies to be narrow in focus, small-scale, short-term, fragmented (Allwright 1988, Chaudron 1988, van Lier 1988), and even flawed as argued by van Lier (1988, 1990) who has questioned the validity and trustworthiness of some of the findings. Consequently, classroom research has moved from the prescriptive to the descriptive and has advanced towards investigating processes instead of techniques (Allwright and Bailey 1991). More recent classroom research—both experimental and descriptive—has drawn attention to diverse variables in the pedagogic process, many of which had been ignored in the earlier process-product studies. Bailey (1995) contends that recognising the importance of exploring cognitive dimensions of second language teachers’ thoughts, judgements and decisions which influence the nature of second language instruction has seen some purposeful research being undertaken (see section 2.2.1). A final point – as teaching takes place in the classroom context, the main venue of this research remains the classroom. Larsen-Freeman (1990), arguing for developing a theory of second language *teaching* (see section 1), maintains that such a theory would need to be grounded in classroom data. It is generally accepted that the classroom is, in the words of Gaies (1980), the ‘crucible’.

Richards and Nunan (1990), Richards (1990a), Gebhard et al. (1990), Ellis (1990b) and Wright (1990), have all stressed the primacy of the classroom in providing data.

Second language classroom-based studies are currently beginning to recognise not only cognitive and affective features but also socio-cultural issues in language learning (see Bailey and Nunan 1996). New orientations to research are being developed particularly through ethnographic approaches to interpret and understand behaviour by taking account of subjective perceptions of participants within specific contexts (Coleman 1996a). In terms of the origins and development of second language teachers' knowledge and thought processes, an important area of investigation is opening up by examining not only the nature of this knowledge but also how this knowledge is learned (Freeman 1994, 1996a). Research on teachers' learning to teach is a recent endeavour (see Johnson 1992, 1994, 1996b, Freeman 1993, Almarza 1996) and findings indicate a valuable area from which insights may be developed.

In this context, reference may be made to Richards (1990a) who has pointed out that tensions are created by the two different approaches to the study of classroom teaching from which theories of teaching as well as principles for teacher preparation programmes can be developed. The micro approach looks at what the teacher does in the classroom, and the macro approach involves making generalisations and inferences which go beyond directly observable and quantifiable classroom processes, and this is no easy task. In fact it is a dilemma that faces language teacher education in general.

Nevertheless, the significance of current research for SLTE cannot be undervalued and lies in diversifying research perspectives towards investigating teachers' knowledge base and thinking processes. At the same time, research must find ways of addressing efficiently both the micro and the macro approaches that Richards (1990a) talks about. Brumfit (1995) has argued for a coherent programme of systematic classroom-based research which complements and interconnects three kinds of studies, *descriptive*, *explanatory* and *pedagogic*, in order to better understand learning and interactional processes. This, he claims, is potentially useful to provide insights that can feed into the development of teaching as a broad-based profession. Indeed such a scenario for research holds positive implications for SLTE.

#### 2.2.4 The teacher as researcher

It is not enough that teachers' work should be studied: they need to study it themselves.  
(Stenhouse 1975: 143)

When teachers' work is studied, the teacher is the focus of research and the perspective is that of the outsider looking in. Widdowson (1990: 59), drawing on terminology from Seliger and Long (1983) and Allwright (1983), distinguishes this as *classroom-oriented* research as opposed to *classroom-centred* research where an insider perspective of the classroom process is taken into account, conforming to an ethnographic tradition. From here it is a step forward to the idea of the teacher himself investigating or 'researching'. The concept of 'teacher as researcher' has emerged in response to two factors: first, a sense of inadequacy arising out of the inability to understand the complex variables in the teaching/learning process without the active involvement of the teacher, and second, the need for the teacher's own professional development.

The history of educational research shows that teachers have generally been treated as providers of data, as helpers, as junior partners or at best, as collaborators while decision-making responsibility has rested upon academic researchers. Furthermore, teachers have often been denied the benefit of access to study findings. There have been attempts to justify the difficulty of linking research and action on the grounds that it might produce internal conflict and a subordination of one to the other (Marris and Rein 1967 cited in Cohen and Manion 1994). Hutchinson and Whitehouse (1986) point to a possibility of confrontation between teacher research and the power hierarchy, as there may be resistance to change initiated by research findings. Additionally, teachers' negative attitudes towards research have been highlighted. It is generally assumed that teachers believe research is too theoretical and findings do not transfer well to the teaching context (Carr and Kemmis 1986). Genuine barriers to teacher research include the extra workload (which many teachers justifiably would be loathe to take on), the constraints on their expertise, their lack of confidence, and others involved in their work environments who may not appreciate this kind of inquiry.

Yet when teachers do get involved in research, there are considerable benefits. As there is experiential investigation of direct classroom issues, it promotes better understanding of practice, enhances the ability to make informed choices and also strikes a positive



chord with current appeals for teachers to develop themselves through reflective practice (see section 3.4.3). Henson (1996) crystallises the issue when he argues that as future teachers will be expected to be proactive problem-solvers, direct involvement in research is excellent preparation for this role. In second language teacher development this has been endorsed by Nunan (1990b, 1993), McDonough and McDonough (1990, 1997), Allwright and Bailey (1991), Wright (1992), Allwright (1993), Edge and Richards (1993), Crookes (1993) and Wallace (1998) among others. Wallace (1998) emphasises the formative nature of action research and recommends it as one of the strategies available to teachers to develop themselves continually on a professional basis, particularly through a process of collaboration. Nunan (1992), Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993), and Roberts (1997) further argue that collaboration between classroom-based practitioner-researcher and university-based researchers additionally has the potential to extend the current research agenda and contribute to a new kind of knowledge. Carr and Kemmis (1986) extend the idea of the advantage of action research beyond the goal of improved pedagogic practice. As critical theorists, they encourage it as a form of self-reflective enquiry to be undertaken by teachers in socio-political contexts in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, and the situations in which these practices are carried out (see section 2.2.6).

Brumfit and Mitchell (1990a) place teacher research in a wider perspective. With the need for serious investigation into language teaching, they argue for modes of understanding from three different angles: firstly, knowing how to teach; secondly, knowing as outsider what teachers do; and thirdly, knowing from experience the practice of teaching. Thus the welfare of educational research, Brumfit and Mitchell contend, depends on combinations of research from a) external perspectives provided by educational and linguistic research, b) collaborative research by teachers and outsiders, and c) research from within teaching itself. This third area of research can only be undertaken by practitioners. In this sense language teachers should be engaging in 'research' if they are to work responsibly and professionally.

The question obviously arises: are teachers to be researchers in the same sense as academics who undertake highly intellectual and rigorous work? Or is their 'research' to be a different type of enterprise? According to Henson (1996):

The term *teacher as researcher* is polymorphous; it continuously changes and it stimulates about as many concepts as the number of individuals who consider it. Any attempt to study the subject requires attention to its many definitions.  
(Henson 1996: 53)

McKernan (1988) advocates that the definition used at any particular time may be determined by the *context* in which it is used and Shannon (1990) states that each definition reflects a different set of values and assumptions. McDonough and McDonough (1997) too point to research implications of disparate kinds determined by the variables of context and teacher role. Nevertheless, teacher involvement in the investigative enterprise has come to be located in the term ‘action research’ which has gained currency in recent years. Cohen and Manion (1994) differentiate between ‘applied research’ which is rigorous and does not claim to contribute directly to the solution of problems and ‘action research’ which is interested in obtaining knowledge for a particular purpose or situation and is therefore situational, collaborative, participatory and self-evaluative. Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) have defined three characteristics of this endeavour – it is carried out by practitioners, it is collaborative, and it is aimed at changing things. McCutcheon and Jung (1990: 144) emphasise the benefits of action research as it is enquiry that “teachers undertake to understand and improve their own practice”. Lytle and Cochran-Smith (1990: 83) define teacher research as “systematic, intentional inquiry by teachers”. This is particularly valuable as it suggests a rigorous examination of one’s own practice as a basis for development. It also conveys the idea of curricula problems experienced as problems by teachers themselves (and not outsiders) and which are subject to empirical examination by practitioners (Carr 1989). Hence Allwright (1993), Richards and Lockhart (1996), McDonough and McDonough (1997) and Wallace (1998) emphasise the advantage of integrating research with teachers’ normal pedagogic practices.

In reply to the legitimacy of teacher action research, I turn to Schön (1983: 68) who states, “When someone reflects in action, he (or she) becomes a researcher in the practice context”. Brumfit and Mitchell (1990a) emphasise the importance of classroom insider research as fulfilling part of a wider need (discussed above) and contend that whether this is called ‘research’ is less important than whether the procedures adopted and the people conducting the study are appropriate for the questions being addressed. Nunan (1993: 42), however, is confident that action research fulfils the requirements of

a systematic process of enquiry as it incorporates all three elements essential for research viz. having a) a problem or question, b) data, and c) analysis and interpretation. Therefore Nunan (1997) maintains that normal criteria of research validity should apply to teacher research as well. Allwright (1997: 369), however, argues quality is less important if the goal is “local understanding rather than incontrovertible findings and universalistic theory”. Wallace (1991:57) too reasons that as the purpose and findings might be primarily specific, “the methods may be more free-ranging than those of conventional research”. Indeed he argues action research may be a slightly more rigorous extension of the normal reflective practice of many teachers. Crookes (1993) upholds that as teachers have a desire for clarity and relevance, the research reporting should be aimed at a teacher audience and not at academia—otherwise dissemination will suffer. In my view the final word may be taken from Argyris and Schön (1991: 85) who, from the action researcher’s perspective, state that the challenge for teachers is to “meet standards of *appropriate* rigour without sacrificing relevance” (my emphasis).

Nunan (1993: 41) values action research as an ‘inside out’ or a bottom-up approach to professional development though Widdowson (1993) questions this claim since teachers are dependent on instructions from academics who occupy a higher plane and therefore sees in this practice, as in many others in the curriculum process, of placing the teacher in a culture of dependency. Nevertheless, it may be pointed out that Widdowson’s critique is directed at the *source* of the procedures of this particular type of teacher action and does not necessarily devalue the practice per se. It may be argued that participation in any sort of enquiry and reflection raises awareness and increases the possibility of self development. Therefore action research needs to be encouraged.

Much of the empirical evidence from action research is as yet anecdotal in nature. Early examples are the AMEP and the LIPT teacher development programmes undertaken in Australia (Nunan 1989b, 1990a, 1993). The more recent national-action research project designed to investigate the impact of newly introduced curriculum frameworks (in Australia again) has resulted in a collection of teacher investigative studies (Burns and Hood 1995). The IATEFL Special Interest Groups viz. ‘Teacher Development’ and ‘Research’ have co-hosted three teacher development and teacher research conferences over the last few years which have brought forth a number of reports based on small-

scale, personal, collaborative research from many parts of the world (see Edge and Richards 1993). Attempts at teacher development through a research perspective have also been documented by Richards and Nunan (1990) and more recently in Freeman and Richards (1996) and Bailey and Nunan (1996). Naidu et al. (1992) describe a collaborative action-research project by a self-initiated teacher development group in South India which studies the heterogeneity in large classes.

In SLTE, trends regarding critical inquiry and the concept of the reflective teacher (Bartlett 1990, Wallace 1991, 1998, Ur 1996, Richards and Lockhart 1996—see sections 3.4.4, 3.5.2) or what Allwright and Bailey (1991) have called ‘exploratory teaching’, appear consonant with the teacher-as-researcher concept. In terms of teacher education, particularly pre-service training, Wallace (1998) maintains it is suited to the development of reflective practice through the process of reflection-*on*-action (see section 3.4.2). For example, Wajnryb (1992) offers practical suggestions of classroom observation tasks for trainees that is built into a teacher-training program to develop teaching/learning insights and Medgyes and Malderez (1996) discuss procedures in a teacher preparation programme in Hungary which promote teacher reflection.

The reflective approach lends itself particularly well to in-service education where teachers bring together a wealth of experience. Thus Ramani (1987) uses classroom observation techniques with the help of video recordings to reveal preconceptions and beliefs of teachers in an in-service programme, while Thorne and Qiang (1996), having run an ELT in-service course in China, argue that encouraging reflective teaching acts as a bridge between theoretical knowledge and the practical realities of the classroom. Wang and Seth (1998) use a collaborative approach, to promote reflection on classroom observation which they claim has a positive and encouraging effect on teacher development. On a somewhat ‘higher’ plane, Widdowson (1990) presents a model of teacher development which encourages ‘pragmatic mediation’ in which the very pedagogic act is seen as a research activity (see section 3.4.3).

McDonough and McDonough (1997) have, however, cautioned against the ‘internationalisation’ of action research by raising the problem of cultural and situational effectiveness of teacher research in worldwide ELT, pointing to the sensitive issue of contextual appropriacy (see section 2.1.6). Nevertheless they contend that

although there may be a sense of distrust, teacher research has potential for stimulating local change which may be preferable to either conservatism or the import of culturally inappropriate methods. O'Hanlon (1996) too suggests action research may be useful as a process of transformational practice in international professional development contexts while Somekh (1993) argues that it is particularly viable when dealing with innovations. This is exemplified in an English curriculum renewal project in India where 'insider-teachers' have been involved in researching the programme from different perspectives which, in turn, is helping teachers to see themselves as change agents (Mathew 1994, Mathew and Eapen 1996). In Bangladesh there is a potential for this kind of mini-research in the just-started ELTIP programme which has teacher training and ELT improvement as its major concern – whether this can be called research is a matter of terminology (see Brumfit and Mitchell 1990a above) and does not detract from its value in promoting teacher development.

### **2.2.5 The teacher as professional**

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1995) defines a *profession* as “a paid occupation, especially one that requires advanced education and training”. Wallace (1991: 5) proposes additional qualities such as “a period of rigorous study which is formally assessed; a sense of public service; high standards of professional conduct; and the ability to perform some specified demanding and socially useful task in a demonstrably competent manner” and the concept of profession appears in a very flattering light.

Maley (1992) presents three interpretations of the semantics of *profession/professional/professionalism*. First, it is defined rigorously with reference to a number of criteria to which lawyers, doctors, engineers qualify. Second, it includes the notion of a commitment to an occupation through conscientious workmanship or the application of skilful work to a high standard of performance (as described above). Third, it refers to receiving remuneration for doing something which others do for fun e.g. a professional footballer. The third definition is irrelevant while the first is difficult to apply to an occupation like language teaching with its diversified demands vis-à-vis qualifications, private/public sector requirements, employers' agendas and the native/non-native speaker issue. Obviously then, ELT teachers fit into the second

definition where the criteria for being a *professional* is related to commitment to a job which requires a high quality of performance. This notion also addresses the qualities presented by Wallace above.

Significantly, Barone et al. (1996) draws a distinction between *professionalism* and *professionism*. The first is oriented to the ideal of service to others while the second is the self-service efforts of privileged groups to preserve status and monopoly. In as much as teachers are committed to serve others, it places them in an appropriate position to aspire to the former notion. *Professionalism* thus appears to involve three basic features—commitment, service to others, and quality performance. Needless to say, the better the teacher's expertise is developed through the educational process, the more professional his/her performance will be.

Historically, Strevens (1963) may claim to be among the earliest to call for a degree of professionalism among language teachers when he argued for an applied linguistics approach (see section 2.1.2). About the same time, the US Modern Language Association prepared its guidelines for teacher education programmes in modern foreign languages while the 1966 *TESOL Guidelines for certification and preparation of ESOL teachers in the United States* attempted to imbibe professional standards by defining the role of the ESL teacher, describing the teacher's personal qualities and professional competencies, stating objectives and characterising the important features of a teacher education programme as developing teachers of high *professional* ability (Norris 1977).

During the past decade, the term *professionalism* among second language teachers has been gaining ground. There have been efforts to move second language teaching away from the status of 'magic' or 'art' and towards the status of *a profession* (Pennington 1990). Widdowson (1990: ix-x), among others, has argued for language teaching to be a *principled professional enterprise*, claiming the status of professionals for teachers with a corresponding commitment on the part of teachers to *proper standards of professionalism*. Wallace (1991) sees a source of empowerment in teachers' performing to *standards of professionalism* in terms of practice as well as in terms of being more effective partners in innovation. Furthermore, Wallace (1993) calls for a *professional dynamic* which advocates teachers taking on the responsibility of change and

continuing development upon themselves. This is increasingly being seen as a proactive and on-going process for the teacher (see previous section, also section 3.3.3). Nunan and Harrison (1994), for example, propose that a curriculum renewal process may be effectively used for the dual purposes of teacher research leading to insights, stimulating change and ultimately feeding into professional development.

In addition, Jackson (1992) emphasises the importance of both formal and informal settings which are current concepts in human resource development in the quest for professionalism. Besides formal expertise, teacher development is also seen in terms of the extent and manner individual teachers develop in the process of their careers in four ways: improving know-how, improving conditions of work, helping teachers handle the psychological stresses of their work, and finally developing a deepened and intensified appreciation of the social and cultural complexities of their work (see section 2.2.6 below). Professionalism and development therefore should afford the means to share knowledge and skills with colleagues and one way of achieving this is through teacher networks and membership of teacher unions and associations (Thomas 1996).

### **2.2.6 Critical discourses in teacher development**

The discussion on the teacher would not be complete without mention of *critical pedagogy* influenced by developments within critical theory based on postmodern political and social consciousness. Moving beyond the deterministic Marxist view of a simple perpetuation of inequality in society, critical thought in mainstream education has worked towards a democratic political agenda, prompting awareness of the influence of societal and ideological constraints on previously taken-for-granted practices. It has urged gaining control over the direction of these influences in order to transform and mediate societal meanings at the situational and institutional levels. Based on the work of Habermas (1974), Apple (1979), Giroux and McLaren (1987) and Giroux (1988), this movement favours an emancipatory model of the teacher as critical theorist. In this context, teacher development programmes function as problematising, investigating the relationship between public and private theories where the emphasis is on the self and others, as well as on political and ethical agendas (Bullough and Gitlin 1994). Elbaz (1983) points out that the ethical thrust of such work is an important complement to an overly pragmatic view of curriculum development.

Other directions have led towards alternative discourses of teacher development by moving beyond teacher practice to focus on teachers' lives. Working within a larger context of institutional structures, teachers' *voice* is sponsored allowing teachers to create and interpret meanings based on self and group agendas (Goodson 1992, Huberman 1993). This corresponds to the *articulative dimension* proposed by Barone et al. (1996)—articulating and professing what teachers hold to be beneficial and effective. They also speak of *operational* (developing a clear sense of preferred ideological content of beliefs and interpretations) and *political dimensions* (possessing political skills and competencies to deal with other stakeholders). Teachers thus gain validity and importance as speakers and hearers within a particular social context. In mainstream teacher education, Hartnet and Carr (1995) and Smythe (1995) advocate that an adequate democratic theory of critical teacher development should be based on socio-political theories that address both group and individual agendas located within a historical, political, educational tradition and context. Thus critical thinking in education is seen as central for continued personal, professional and societal growth.

In Britain and North America, the power of *ideology* has, to some extent, long been realised within general education (Holliday 1996), but this issue is relatively low-key in the field of second language teaching. True there have been some proponents. A heightened awareness of context, culture and history has prompted Kramsch (1993) and Pennycook (1989, 1990, 1994a) to connect pedagogical theory and practice to wider social issues. Kramsch (1993: 244) summarises a number of features essential for a critical language pedagogy which include teachers' awareness of global context, local knowledge and the ability to listen. Bartlett (1990) has argued for critical reflective teaching to enable teachers to see their actions in relation to historical, social and cultural contexts.

Furthermore, there have been suggestions that innovations in language teaching, far from being accepted unquestioningly, should be subject to critical scrutiny (see section 2.1.7). Pennycook (1989) has critiqued the extravagant claims made by the methods concept in language pedagogy. He claims the methods phenomenon has actually legitimised certain forms of knowledge and behaviour in classrooms while serving a range of political, academic and commercial interests. Commercial interests in the



global ELT market have been studied by Littlejohn (1992) who argues that ELT coursebooks are “the way they are” predominantly because of a subtle range of influences wielded by leading Anglocentric publishers. Pennycook’s (1994a) argument for the *worldliness* of English suggests the formulation of counter-discourses and alternative possibilities in non-English speaking countries in order to counter Anglo-American dominant ideologies. He hopes that “critical English educators may be able to use the concept of worldliness ... and engage in a critical, transformative and listening critical pedagogy through English” (Pennycook 1994a: 326).

Like much of the literature on critical pedagogy, the concerns expressed above may be viewed as an overarching superordinate desideratum for the philosophy of education in general. With regard to SLTE, although there has been no overt attempt to include this feature in any explicit manner, I would like to argue that some of the current proposals in teachers’ reflective teaching, decision-making and professional development may be linked to democratic and political processes that favour a critical stance.

It is relevant to incorporate my own perceptions here. Such analyses are aimed at a level of ideology that transcends the range of immediate experiences and concerns faced by education in developing countries like Bangladesh with its population of 124 million, a literacy rate of 44.8%, and a serious constraint on resources. Furthermore, though desirable from an ideological perspective, possibilities and limitations of such actions on the ground need to be analysed in depth. Calderhead, for example, voices reservations. He states that though such a focus is valuable in relation to issues such as racism, equality and sexism, it is also conceivable that emphasis on a critical evaluation of the implicit values of practice “might in some contexts be quite debilitating, lessening teachers’ capacity for appropriate action” (Calderhead 1989: 45).

### **2.2.7 Synthesising the findings on the teacher**

The existing conceptualisation of teachers and their role in curriculum development can be perceived on a continuum, ranging from an imitative craftsman or a passive instrument for implementing imposed curricula decisions to a proactive and engaging professional in control of his/her work and environment, with variations in-between. In spite of the diverse perspectives emanating from disparate sources (empirical,

speculative and traditional), it is essential to realise that teachers are first and foremost individuals working in complex situations populated by large groups of other individuals with their private agendas and therefore it would be an exercise in audacity to pretend to understand completely the whole range of teacher practices. However, as a framework on which to base second language teacher education, a set of organising principles are required to be set in place.

Therefore to rationalise the assumptions in teacher education programmes, relevant strands of information and understanding in this field have been synthesised. Firstly, it is seen that the formulation of atomistic objectives for teacher training was narrowly conceived in a positivist tradition. Based on the process-product research tradition which did not take sufficient variables into account, its relevance soon became doubtful. Secondly, came a growing awareness of the teacher as an individual and the realisation that teaching behaviour was influenced by psychological and ecological contexts. New orientations drawing on cognitive psychology and ethnographic studies have led to attempts to understand teachers within two further perspectives – their characteristics as well as their knowledge base and thought processes including their socialised pre-teaching beliefs. A significant offshoot of this has been an awareness of the need to understand student-teachers' own learning processes. Additionally, a growing sense of enhanced professionalism has gone hand in hand with perceptions of teaching as a continuing process of development, part of which may be facilitated through reflection and action research by teachers themselves. Last but not the least, influences from critical pedagogy have urged teachers to gain control over the direction of societal and ideological influences over their practices.

### **2.3 Summary and conclusion**

In this chapter I have presented a review of the influences on second language teaching and indirectly on second language teacher education. I have also discussed the varied perspectives through which the teacher has been and is currently being viewed. As studies into second language teaching, not to mention EFL/ESL teacher education have been inadequate and sometimes inconclusive, developments from mainstream teacher education have been drawn upon where relevant.

The assumptions informing this field besides being based on conventional wisdom and tradition, have been influenced by ideas drawn from linguistics, with psychology, sociology and SLA making their contributions. A strong input from process-product classroom studies during the last two decades have currently gone into disrepute. In general, the history of language teaching has shown a repeated oversimplification of assumptions arising mainly from theorising within rather rigid orientations, resulting in inadequacies in the conceptualisation of the teaching-learning process, as well as of teachers and their role in the curriculum. SLTE too has developed tentatively in tandem based on these tenuous assumptions.

Of central importance is the distinction between the conditioning versus the cognitive views of teacher education, and although current notions favour the latter, there appears to be a tension between normative and analytic practices in SLTE. There has at least been a call for recognising the need for a *second language teaching* theory (Larsen-Freeman 1990) as distinct from the hitherto second language *learning* theory which has been the dominant principle in teacher education. A *teaching* theory for SLTE allows a broader perspective which includes an interest not only in *content* (what teachers need to know to teach effectively) but also in the *process* (how beginning and practising teachers learn to teach and continue to develop) with a growing focus on teacher thinking and decision-making plus the impact of the environment in which they operate.

Such a perspective underlies a multi-disciplinary approach which includes insights from a variety of fields particularly cognitive psychology, teacher socialisation studies and an ethnographic orientation towards educational planning and management and offers prospects for a broad-based understanding of the field. Together with a growing perception of teachers' cognitive and contextual roles (a far cry from the 'teacher-proof' curricula practices of not too long ago) and an appreciation of a sense of teacher professionalism, there is an urgent need for descriptive and interpretive research. There is also a call to the hitherto marginalised teacher to engage in action research within individual contexts. A cumulative outgrowth of these endeavours may lead to a better understanding of learning and teaching processes and can simultaneously feed into insights necessary for language teacher education.

With an increased demand for teacher development extending beyond the temporal bounds of a formal course, the need for a comprehensive undertaking of SLTE provisions is a major educational priority. This leads us to two key issues that have had significant impact on the principles underpinning teacher education programmes—the relationship between *theory* and *practice* as well as *education* and *training*—to which I now turn.

## CHAPTER 3

### Second language teacher education: A conceptual framework

#### 3. Introduction

In this chapter I continue my survey of the developments that have informed second language teacher education. I consider two key issues that have had significant relevance within teacher education programmes – the relationship between *theory* and *practice* (section 1) and the implications of the concepts of *education* and *training* (section 2). In section 3, set against a scenario of professional development, I present some prominent models of SLTE. An analysis of these models together with the insights culled from the literature survey leads me on to a formulation of a framework of principles on which an SLTE programme needs to be based.

#### 3.1 Theory and practice in second language teaching

A theory views a topic or certain practical activities as something coherent and unified..... A theory offers a system of thought, a method of analysis and synthesis, or a conceptual framework in which to place different observations, phenomena, or activities.  
(Stern1983a: 25-26)

Stern (1983a) views theory as a set of rationally argued ideas intended to explain facts or events, or a set of principles on which thought or action is based. It is also understood as a hypothesis or a concept that generalises. The crucial factor is that a theory can direct further thought. Stern presents the idea of theory at three levels ranging from a broad generic concept to a single principle with the generic theory able to subsume the others in a hierarchical order. In language pedagogy, for example, a particular view of learning can subsume a theory of second language learning and lead on to a preferred methodology of teaching.

*Theory* in language teaching is generally understood as the contributions of the most important supporting disciplines, linguistics, psychology, sociology and education, and therefore, theory is usually equated with linguistic theory and learning theory. These have laid the foundation for a dominant view of what language teachers should know

and therefore what they should do in their classrooms (Freeman 1994). In certain situations, theoretical underpinnings become particularly evident as in policy decisions regarding curriculum planning, syllabus design, the writing of textbooks and the choice of teaching programmes. In this way, sound theory has a valid role in initiating, evaluating, changing, adapting or ratifying educational practice. Theory also manifests itself clearly in debates when expressing views, making choices, and defending positions. Thus theory may cover a set of practices, or it can describe phenomena in general terms, or it can express a personal belief.

*Practice*, on the other hand, is defined as a real-time localised event or a set of such events i.e. particular professional experiences (Ur 1996). It includes all the activities we associate with the business of teaching from the interactional and transactional roles of the teacher inside and outside the classroom to the interventionist means that are employed to develop language in learners. Whether practice is seen as a set of isolated, inert techniques that teachers operate with or whether these procedures are incorporated under some theoretical principles which teachers work with is the issue I attempt to explore now.

### **3.1.1 Theory development**

According to Howatt (1984), discussions involving theory development as a basis for the debate on language pedagogy have been evolving over the last hundred years. Theory has been put forward in a variety of forms. Sometimes it has appeared in an abstract form, at other times an applied form, occasionally it has been pretended to be ‘espoused’, and at times has been completely ignored. Nevertheless, the importance of sound theory development cannot be overemphasised and Stern (1983a: 30) suggests a number of criteria to characterise a good language teaching theory. They are: *usefulness and applicability; explicitness; coherence and consistency; comprehensiveness; explanatory power and verifiability; simplicity and clarity*. He maintains that linguistic theories are like artefacts which are created by highlighting some aspects at the expense of others. They cannot give definitive interpretations but provide ideas and concepts that “offer a protection against oversimplification”(Stern 1983a: 185) and help the language teaching practitioner to think critically and constructively about language.

However, there have been cases to the contrary—theories have been utilised as dominant paradigms to further particular agendas and therefore instead of protecting against oversimplification as Stern claims, they have actually oversimplified the issues. This is illustrated by ‘audiolingualism’, propagated by principles derived from structural linguistics and behavioural psychology as a guideline for producing “the most efficient teaching materials” (sic), Fries (1957). The structural approach to materials design went into disrepute precisely because of its oversimplistic theoretical base and lack of flexibility.

There is of course the danger of weak theorising with inadequate formulations and weak conceptualisations in any area of study. In spite of cautionary voices from time to time in second language pedagogy (for example, Carroll, 1971, warned against inappropriate theorising nearly 30 years ago), some of the language acquisition theories, the methods models, and the form-function hypothesis have often shown insufficient conceptualisation. Furthermore, much of the difficulty arose from what Wallace (1991) has described as the unjustified analogies being imposed on the complexity of teaching. Thus even with sound theorising, Freeman (1991) has warned of ‘mistaken constructs’ and argues that in mapping out the terrain of language teaching using borrowed constructs, issues which do not fit within these are missed or overlooked, thus rendering the constructs inappropriate. Garrett (1990) asserts that whereas a lack of interdependence of theory, practice and research is problematic, the other side of the coin, ‘inappropriate’ interdependence, may be even more serious leading to “pedagogical manipulations motivated by ideological rather than theoretical considerations” (Garrett 1990: 515). Widdowson (1984a, 1990) further advocates evaluating theories in relation to the context in which they are developed. Hence, besieged as we are today with research and erudition on a massive scale, it is all the more necessary to guard against weak theorising and inappropriate application.

#### **3.1.1.1 The role of theoretical studies**

In spite of strong endorsements in the literature over the past two decades for theory to forge a symbiotic relationship with pedagogic practice, achievement on the ground has not been consistent. In a purely rationalist tradition, theories from academic disciplines such as linguistics, phonetics, and psycholinguistics are presented on SLTE courses

without any overt links being made to pedagogy. Teachers are expected to establish the connections between the theories forwarded in these disciplines and then to apply principles to pedagogic practice in their specific teaching situations. This form of study can be considered a major contributor to the dysfunctionality of theory in the life of teachers who find no link between the theoretical coursework they undertake and their subsequent practice. Wallace (1991) calls this the *extreme* applied science approach. Lyons (1990) categorises it as a *weaker* form terming it *linguistic theory* which he claims has validity in other areas of study but definitely not in pedagogy. It is no surprise that Stevens (1963), once again, was amongst the earliest to point out the irrelevance of *pure theoretical studies* for the language teacher and called for the *applied linguistics* approach in order to integrate theories and principles from allied disciplines considered appropriate for language teaching. He stated:

Out of such states there is currently emerging a theoretical view of the total language learning and teaching process, a 'theory of language teaching' which will doubtless contribute more directly to future teacher training than linguistics or psychology have been able to do as separate disciplines.

(Stevens 1974: 25)

However, in certain SLTE courses in Bangladesh, the education of English language teachers even today is often based largely on the content learning of linguistic theories, psycholinguistic theories, or even of pure phonetics (see section 4.2.4). This is in consonance with the aims of a content-driven syllabus treated in terms of the transmission view of teaching that symbolises the 'classical humanistic' value system of education as outlined by Clark (1987).

### **3.1.1.2 Theory applied**

This is the *applied science* form where an overt link is established between a theoretical knowledge base and the development of skills and techniques of classroom teaching and management through a process of direct explanation, discussion and/or problem-solving. The link is seen as unidirectional with theory occupying a higher plane and informing practice. Lyons (1990) sees it as a *stronger* form and calls it *theoretical linguistics* as opposed to *linguistic theory* which is the abstract form. Corder (1973) who championed the *applied linguistics* approach in the positivist tradition, stressed the



application of theoretical knowledge to techniques and procedures and the need to develop in student teachers through practical and theoretical work an understanding of what it means to ‘know the language’, ‘how’ that language is acquired and by implication ‘how’ teachers can help learners acquire the language. He further advocated that descriptions of language provide the inventory from which a selection should be made to draw up the syllabus for any teaching operation. This is illustrated in the wide ranging coverage of aspects of language teaching set in theoretical perspective by Allen and Corder (1973-1975). Other works along the same principle are those by Halliday, McIntosh and Stevens (1964) and Mackay (1965). The transmission mode of language teacher development favoured here permitted only a top-down approach.

Thus SLTE theories developed with a heavy reliance on linguistics and a *strong* version of applied linguistics. This, however, led to some scepticism. Markee (1990) argues against too strong a dependence on theoretical linguistics as directly applicable in resolving second language teaching problems, highlighting the difficulty of incorporating teacher insights and experiences in the validation of such rigid theory-driven programmes. A less constricting perspective is advocated – what Markee calls a *weak* definition based on Stevens’ redefinition of applied linguistics (Stevens 1975 ‘Statement for AILA’ cited in Kaplan 1980). This envisages the field operating from a multi-disciplinary orientation combining insights from linguistics, psychology, education, management, sociology, ethnography, language planning and development planning in order to design, complement and maintain programmes (as argued in chapter 2). This stance provides the necessary element of flexibility to tune into the complex needs and realities of the language teaching situation today. Van Lier (1997) too argues for a diversity of perspectives by striking a balance through interdependence with other relevant fields.

### **3.1.1.3 Theory espoused**

Experiencing or hearing about practice is of limited value to the teacher unless it is more widely applicable by being incorporated into some sort of theoretical framework constructed, believed in, and in a manner of speaking, ‘owned’ by the teacher. A teacher who has formed a clear conception of the principles underlying a particular procedure can use those principles to inform and create further practice. Otherwise the

original procedure will remain merely an isolated, inert technique which can be used only in one specific context. When theory is not interpreted or believed in and is merely paid lip service, it is, in Argyris and Schön's (1974) term, 'espoused'. Ur (1996) maintains 'espoused' theories which are claimed by an individual to be true but have no clear expression in practice or are even contradicted by it, are the foundation of the kind of meaningless theory that teachers usually complain about. Unfortunately, these 'espoused' theories generally have their roots in pre- and in-service teacher education courses when trainee-teachers failing to make valid interpretations are obliged to show their allegiance to the theoretical knowledge they are exposed to by this pretence at believing some theory. For example, so many teachers today will vow that they follow the principles of communicative language teaching whereas actual classroom practice often negates this claim. Often there are no clearly specified characteristics in teachers' minds about particular methods so that two teachers professing to teach one method will teach differently. As Pennycook (1989) has pointed out, there is little evidence that methods reflect classroom reality.

Further, it is relevant to remember that language teaching has historically been based on intuition and common sense as well as on practices which were seen and felt to be worthy of replication without adequate awareness of the principles underlying the practice (see section 2.1.1). Indeed it would not be far from the truth to state that much current classroom practice is carried out in a similar manner, sometimes out of ignorance, at other times in the name of eclecticism. My study of the attitudes and beliefs of secondary school English teachers, however, shows that even though there is a general lack of awareness of any theoretical basis for pedagogic practice, teachers do make subconscious assumptions, which may be said to constitute an implicit theory that guides their practice (see chapter 6). In this respect, I would argue that there is a theory of teaching present, however idiosyncratic, which may not always be understood or articulated in a meaningful way. This is precisely where teacher education courses can focus in, by helping teachers to make sense of their implicit theories and link into theories offered by received wisdom.

An example of theory being driven underground is exemplified during the period of disillusionment with methods. Rivers (1968), analysing the pitfalls of the audiolingual method in the late sixties, believed teachers could not declare their allegiance to each

and every method that came into vogue and therefore advised them to exercise *eclecticism* i.e. absorbing the best techniques of all best known methods for purposes for which they were most appropriate – a highly desirable quality drawing upon the best attributes of professionalism. Exercised in an informed manner, eclecticism is praiseworthy but the suspicion remains as to the extent teachers actually do engage in or are capable of engaging in such practice. It is therefore disturbing to acknowledge that perhaps too many teachers have used and may still use a combination of techniques conveniently captioned as ‘eclectic’ without adequate theoretical basis.

As pointed out by Krashen (1983), when teachers do not understand the theoretical implications, they are either forced to adopt the entire package or become ‘eclectic’, collecting techniques from sources without any coherent sense as to what effect each technique has on the learning process. Others have voiced their cynicism about the eclectic approach that has been bandied around for a time. Widdowson (1979b: 243, 1984a) considers a potpourri of techniques under the so-called eclectic approach a haphazard venture and “an excuse for irresponsible ad-hocery” while Prabhu (1990: 168) regards an unprincipled blending of methods as “an act of gambling or a hedging of bets”. The other side of the coin of course is a well-informed teacher who has an insight into pedagogic principles and practices and has the ability to appropriately select or adapt them according to the needs of learners and the context.

### **3.1.2 Theory and language teachers**

The relationship between theory and practice in the lives of language teachers has not been an easy one. Generally there has been a deep distrust of theory among practitioners. On the one hand, there is a sense of academic indulgence to theory perceived as having no real relevance to teaching (Carr and Kemmis 1986, Shavelson 1988, McDonough and McDonough 1990, Widdowson 1997). On the other, there is strong resentment arising from a perception of theory being disruptive to sound, established practices developed through long experience (Clarke 1992, 1994). Ur (1996) maintains this arises:

.....from understanding the two words in a very specific way: ‘theory’ as abstract generalisation that has no obvious connection with teaching reality; ‘practice’ as tips about classroom procedure.  
(Ur 1996: 3)

This distrust has been fuelled by the creation of a hierarchical distinction between academics and practitioners who can be quite contemptuous of each other (Wallace 1991) and additionally in developing contexts, in my view, between expatriate native-speaker specialists on the one hand, and non-native speaker specialists and local practitioners, on the other, creating as Schön (1983: 36) calls “a ladder of status”.

Theories of language and language learning that form components in SLTE courses tend to be reactive in nature, the student teacher being the consumer of knowledge generated by experts elsewhere, a knowledge which often remains abstract and elitist in tone (Edge 1989). Moreover, the practical component in SLTE does not always relate clearly to the theoretical component which remains raw and unprocessed. Thus, trainees are often left in the dark about their implications resulting in a rejection of ideas and attitudes learnt in courses once they start actual teaching (Wragg 1982). This disenchantment with theory is felt by Clarke (1992, 1994) to be dysfunctional for teachers and Ur (1996) traces it to the phenomenon of *espoused* theory (see section 3.1.1.3). It is no wonder that with a lack of theoretical validation, language teachers often turn to collections of techniques and resource books of the ‘recipes for tired teachers’ type that have proliferated the ELT scene over the last two decades.

What therefore is particularly important is the necessity of demystifying the nature of theory for teachers. Kennedy (1989: 130) advocates teachers’ theoretical qualification is useful but “so long as the theory can be applied” and for this reason, teacher education courses, must of necessity provide theoretical knowledge which is comprehensible and relevant. Wallace (1991) advises teacher education courses to be explicit about establishing i.e. implementing and evaluating the relationship between academic information and practice. It should not be left to students to make the application as they tend to compartmentalise knowledge from different learning contexts and different tutors, and more importantly, this application is a “fairly sophisticated operation which most trainees cannot achieve without guidance” (Wallace 1991: 56). Ur (1996) and Medgyes and Malderez (1996) propose ways of reconciling theory and practice by appealing both to experiential knowledge, first-hand and vicarious (through observation, anecdote, video and audio transcripts), enriched by external sources of input (from experts, from research, and from reading). Similarly

Johnson (1996b: 770) proposes that teachers should be “constantly engaged in a process of sense-making” within the context of real teaching so that theory can be relevant for practice. Again, how effectively these procedures are implemented in a teacher education course remains crucial. Nevertheless Widdowson (*passim*) argues:

Teachers who reject theory as being irrelevant to practice not only misunderstand the nature of their work, but at the same time undermine their profession.  
(Widdowson 1990: xi)

### **3.1.3 Theory and practice: an interrelated form**

John Dewey’s analysis of logic and enquiry which emphasised that all knowledge originated in ‘felt’ problems, is perhaps the earliest clear statement of the need for the interrelation of theory and practice in education (Dewey 1938 cited in Elbaz 1983), although with the teacher being looked upon in terms of a passive instrument in the curriculum process, theory was not seen as entering the teacher’s repertoire but as informing the policies and practices of the discipline. Within general curriculum development in mainstream education, Schwab (1969) brought the issue of theory and practice to the forefront of educational concern. He argued that as the teacher’s work is predominantly practical, conceptualisation should take place in practical terms. Good theories generate practice and so Wardhaugh (1969: 116) claimed, “There is indeed nothing so practical as a good theory”.

It has come to be generally recognised in educational thought that the top-down practice of trying to apply theoretical findings from experimental ‘scientific’ research into educational issues has proved unreliable. This is due to the fact that many studies, in particular the process-product experimental investigations, have given inconclusive, contradictory, even misleading answers to the questions asked (Wragg 1982, Schön 1983, Stenhouse in Rudduck and Hopkins 1985 – see section 2.2.3 for a similar failure of process-product studies in second language pedagogy). This led to a growing concern about the difficulties of favouring a hierarchical structure in which theory influenced practice. A two-way process needed to be endorsed to allow for a full realisation of the potential of theory for pedagogy.

The relationship between theory and practice in teacher education is not of implementation—theory being translated into practice—but a continuously interactive one.....theory can provide the analytic and conceptual apparatus for thinking about practice, while practice can provide the opportunity for the testing and assimilation of theory.  
(Calderhead 1988: 9)

In the context of SLTE, through the mid-seventies and eighties, the need for recognition of this link between theory and practice began to be voiced. Strevens (1974) not only emphasised the applied approach to the use of theoretical knowledge and the need for formulating a language teaching theory but also turned out to be the forerunner of the faith in the interdependence of linguistic theory and pedagogic practice. He added in a footnote to his paper on the basic principles of teacher training:

Applied linguistics in this sense mediates between the theoretical and the practical. The applied linguist needs to be aware of developments in theory as well as of practical problems, so that he can use insights from the former to assist the latter – and sometimes *vice versa*.  
(Strevens 1974: 25) (emphasis in original)

The ‘*vice versa*’ has gradually come to be appreciated—in the recognition of a bidirectional flow between linguistic theory and language teaching and the possibility and desirability of one informing the other. The formulation of a complementary view of theory and practice—an interdependence that has come to be seen as essential to sound pedagogic practice has been advocated by Brumfit (1979, 1983b), Widdowson (1984a, 1984b, 1990, 1993), Ferguson (1989), Edge (1989), Larsen-Freeman (1983, 1990), Richards (1990b), Wallace (1991), Ur (1996), Richards (1998). Increasingly theory and practice are being seen as two components of a single dialectic. The general trend can be summed up in the following statement:

The effectiveness of practice depends on relevant theory: the relevance of theory depends on effective practice. The two are in complementary relationship, each sustaining the other. (Widdowson 1984a: 36)

More bluntly put:

Practice on its own, paradoxically, is not very practical: it is a dead end.  
Theory on its own is even more useless.  
(Ur 1996: 4).

The ultimate celebration of theorising takes the form of the teacher as theorist (Prabhu 1992, 1995) based on the concept of ‘tacit knowledge’, the framework for which is taken from Schön’s (1983) ‘theory of action’ (see section 3.3.4). Widdowson (1990) argues for a mediating role between theory and practice for the teacher in order to interpret and evaluate principles and ideas that inform pedagogy and then by evaluating the operational application of these principles in terms of classroom experience (for a discussion of the mediational role of the teacher see section 3.4.3). Wallace (1991) and Ur (1992, 1996) have as their objective in SLTE programmes a central role being occupied by *a theory of action* by means of a continual interaction between the theoretical and practical components of the course. Thus recent developments in SLTE can be seen as striving to resolve this central issue of a reciprocal relationship between principle and technique, theory and practice. However, it remains to be seen to what extent this can be effectively achieved in teacher education courses.

### **3.2 Theory and practice in second language teacher education**

Although it is now generally endorsed that firstly, theory and theorising is essential for pedagogic practice and secondly, theory and practice should exist in a complementary relationship, the track record of the theoretical underpinnings of SLTE shows a dubious development (see section 2.1). Indeed, as pointed out at the outset, there is concern that the second language teaching profession lacks the sound structure of systematic knowledge that can explain and direct it.

Nevertheless it may be pointed out that SLTE has generally been guided by some overarching principle (even the “sitting with Nellie” procedure, the craft model of professional development, would have been imbibed by a behaviourist perspective). What is important then is the *nature* of this theorizing. Over the years this has come under critical scrutiny. Richards (1990a) points out that contributors to this theoretical knowledge base could hardly claim any direct relation between their work and the preparation of language teachers and therefore more systematic study than is presently available of actual second language teaching processes is essential to provide a better and more relevant theoretical bases for deriving practices in SLTE. Richards has referred to this as the dilemma of reconciling micro and macro approaches to classroom

research. The following describes the macro approach to research that is necessary for providing insights for SLTE.

To prepare effective language teachers, it is necessary to have *a theory of effective language teaching* – a statement of the general principles that account for effective teaching, including a specification of the key variables in effective language teaching and how they are interrelated. Such a theory is arrived at through the study of the teaching process itself. This theory should form the basis for the principles and content of second language teacher education.

(Richards 1990a: 4, my emphasis)

Larsen-Freeman (1990), too, has called for a theory of second language teaching grounded on classroom data:

Researchers should not be limited to SLA procedures, but should freely draw upon psychological, social and anthropological traditions. In addition, since teachers have previously been neglected in our research, much more attention should be accorded them in *any theory of SLT*.

(Larsen-Freeman 1990: 267, my emphasis)

Studies to identify the key variables that need to be specified as effective language teaching (and not learning) as stated by Richards and Larsen-Freeman above, has been undertaken more seriously by researchers in mainstream education, by Elbaz 1983, Wittrock 1986, Calderhead 1987, 1990, Houston 1990, Sikula et al. 1996 among others. Among the variables that have been and are being investigated are teachers' beliefs and perceptions, teachers' knowledge base and teachers' decision making processes (see section 2.2.1). Even so, as Hargreaves (1997) regrets, mainstream educational research has not offered enough information to elaborate a *general* theory of teaching. Consider then the status of SLTE, with its paucity of research on critical aspects of the teacher as well as its current rather inadequate knowledge base.

As a way forward, the need for a multi-disciplinary approach for developing a broad-based profession has already been discussed in the previous chapter. To this, Bailey (1995) asserts, can be added two methodological developments currently gaining recognition. One is action research (see section 2.2.4) and the other is the rise of ethnography (see section 5.2) as an approach to second language classroom research, both focusing on the teacher and on essential psychological and socio-cultural complexities of teaching contexts. This is moving the field forward towards a theory of



second language teaching (see Brumfit and Mitchell 1990, Richards and Nunan 1990, Bailey and Nunan 1996, Coleman 1996a).

The discussion in this section has so far related to the nature of theory-building in SLTE in terms of input from information both inter-disciplinary and intra-disciplinary. As far as assumptions underlying the principles of SLTE are concerned, there is no doubt in current literature about the importance of establishing an overt link between theoretical principles and practice in education programmes for teachers. In this context, despite the general inadequacies alluded to in my previous discussion, there have admittedly been specific efforts to promote theory-building in SLTE. Some of these are discussed below.

### **3.2.1 Reconciling theory and practice: early attempts**

In the context of English language teacher education (ELTE), Strevens (1974) presents one of the earliest comprehensive ‘principles for teacher training’ where *theory* (with *skills* and *information*) comprises one of the three components of a training course for EFL/ESL teachers. In its applied science form, theory integrates appropriate parts of linguistics and psychology most relevant to language teaching. Strevens proposes that theoretical knowledge cannot be assimilated through lectures but by a series of discussions, problem-solving, tutorial explanations, and that sheer time is needed to absorb new habits of thought. What is important here is the attention given to the modality of participation in integrating theoretical knowledge with practice on the training courses.

A few years earlier, Bright (1968: 19) had noted that teachers “could happily regurgitate modern theory and then go into the classroom and teach exactly as they had been taught” – an observation echoed to this day. He attempted to relate all theory to classroom practice by providing background theory in small doses, demanding immediate applications in the classroom through a process of practice, problem-solving and discussion. Although Bright’s concern about establishing a link between theory and practice in small doses was commendable, he was still working within a positivist perspective where experts and academics occupied the position of authority imposing knowledge on practitioners who were placed on a lower plane (Bolitho 1988).

### 3.2.2 GURT'83

Among the earlier attempts to initiate a wide-ranging discussion on the preparation of second language teachers, I turn to *GURT '83 (Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics)*. The theme was “*Applied Linguistics and the preparation of second language teachers: towards a rationale*” (Alatis, Stern and Stevens 1983). Given the time when the conference was held, it is no surprise the general consensus on the nature of theory in the context of SLTE favoured an applied science approach, the theorist in general seen as providing the principles to guide the practitioner. However, there were a few contributors who were opinion leaders and forerunners, particularly Brumfit, Larsen-Freeman and Celce-Murcia who argued for an inductive approach. Some of the papers are discussed below in terms of varying themes.

Long (1983) expressed scepticism about top-down theories and argued that *classroom-centred research* should receive attention as the means of providing valid information about learners and learning processes. In spite of the fact that he was referring to the process-product studies that went into disrepute some years later (see section 2.2.3), it has to be appreciated that Long's argument for systematic knowledge to emanate from the *classroom* actually identified the crucial setting in the fact-finding mission. The importance of the classroom as providing data for teacher education is now generally accepted (Richards 1990a, Gebhard et al 1990, Ellis 1990b, Nunan 1992, Coleman 1996a, Bailey and Nunan 1996) and current research, though more heuristic and exploratory, continues to remain classroom or teacher-centred.

In addition, it was felt *more SLA research was needed* to inform SLTE practices (Krashen 1983). Krashen, in spite of cautioning against the dependence on theory as the only source of information about language teaching in view of its tentative nature in the light of new developing data, went on to claim that his own theory of Input Hypothesis (significantly in capital letters) was vital for understanding second language acquisition. This single theory was presented as a panacea (sic) for all problems related to methodology, enabling teachers to be independent practitioners, resisting bandwagons and adopting a principled form of eclecticism when necessary!

On the other hand, Brumfit (1983b), building on his notion of “informed optimistic scepticism” (Brumfit 1979:3) maintained that principles of applied linguistics alone could not form the framework for teacher education as that would be a mere academic endeavour (the reason for his viewing with suspicion the validity of some post-graduate university courses on offer at the time). As teachers “operate with category systems [which] ultimately derive from theory” (1983b: 63), Brumfit argued for *theory to provide a model of interpretation of evidence* related to the classroom which would then allow analysis and informed choices. This would lead as well to the option for reassessment, adaptation and adjustment. Widdowson (1993) detects here the position subsequently adopted by Nunan (1989b) i.e. that theorising in teacher development needs to be ‘client-centred’. I would suggest that Brumfit’s proposal here also foreshadows Widdowson’s (1990) own theory of pragmatic mediation (section 3.4.3).

Among the various issues discussed at Georgetown, the topic of *teacher cognition* (section 2.2.1) appears particularly significant in the light of later developments. This point was emphasised in some of the papers but in a clearly prescriptive manner. Altman (1983) advocated the fostering of positive attitudes necessary for a richer affective learning, anticipating the observation made by Britten that “though whole skills execute, it is attitudes that command” (Britten 1985: 122). This was still a far cry from recognizing teachers’ beliefs and attitudes about the world they operate in as understood in a constructivist perspective (see section 2.1.3).

However, Brown (1983) made a valuable proposition – *language teachers’ intuitions* were considered invaluable and hence in need of developing so that they could be used alongside scientific analysis of input. This sense of intuition is reflective of Schön’s (1983) ‘knowing-in-action’ phenomenon of the professional who displays appropriate skills but is unable to articulate the rules and procedures involved. Celce-Murcia (1983) implied the need for an *educative perspective* while Larsen-Freeman (1983) clearly advocated *the educative process*. They both made suggestions on interpretative activities to develop teacher thinking through problem-solving, discussion and analysis in teacher preparation courses so as to facilitate *inductive theory development*.

Although the brief of GURT ’83 had been to move towards a rationale for the preparation of second language teachers, apart from Brumfit’s approach towards a

framework for *principled teaching*, Larsen-Freeman's call for *an educative process* and Brown's proposal for developing language *teachers' intuitions*, the issues under discussion though relevant to SLTE were perhaps of too varied a nature to allow the formation of a coherent theoretical base. It was admitted:

GURT '83 has confirmed that we lack an established theory of SLTE, that research is sparse, that some major differences of view persist, and that even the main issues are not yet very sharply defined.  
(Stern and Strevens 1983: 1).

Since then research and analyses on varied issues pertaining to language learning and teaching have been undertaken and more than fifteen years on, although the field has made inroads into several areas, it has not as yet been able, as stated earlier, to formulate a clearly coherent theory of SLTE.

### **3.2.3 The enquiry-oriented approach**

Attempts at integrating theory and practice within a holistic perspective continue to be seen as one of the most crucial issues in SLTE. According to Britten (1985), it has undertaken to move from the doctrinaire to the permissive, from the trainer-centred to the trainee-centred. Widdowson (1984b, 1990) argues for the importance of analytic thought and rational enquiry. He appeals for greater attention to the development of a spirit of enquiry among teachers and stresses the need for them to understand the relationship between theoretical principle and practical technique and "to test out one against the other in a continual process of experimentation" (Widdowson 1984a: 132). While Brumfit (1979, 1983b) advocates evolving a conceptual framework for integrating research and theory with teaching, Ur (1996), as envisaged by Dewey in general education as early as in 1938, sees theory emanating from practice and not the other way round. Widdowson (1997) too considers practice as generating its own theory and hence being relevant to pedagogy.

The matter of theory integration has come to be seen not so much as a problem of content in SLTE but as one of methodology and therefore evolving suitable practices have become essential. With a redefinition of the teacher's role as no longer passive, the authoritative, transmissive approach has given way to an interactive one. The most

preferred strategy related to the learner/learning-centred ideology is the experiential, problem-oriented procedure which is generally known as the ‘reflective’ approach or as Zeichner (1983) calls it the *enquiry-oriented* approach (see the reflective approach in section 3.4.3).

Calderhead (1989) has identified the key concepts that have attributed to the growth of this analytic, reflective approach in teacher education. These are drawn from:

- a. Dewey’s (1933) formulation of the thinking process and the concept of ‘reflection’ on problems.
- b. Schön’s (1983) ‘reflection-in-action’ as the exercise of interactive, interpretative skills.
- c. Gauthier (1963) and Polanyi’s (1967) philosophy of practical action from where deliberative ideas have emanated.
- d. The tenets of the curriculum theorists (Schwab 1971, Van Manen 1977) who have applied the philosophy of deliberative ideas (in c. above) to teaching.
- e. The work of the influential Frankfurt School of Social Research and particularly the critical science concept derived from Habermas (1974) (see section 2.2.6).

A more immediate and direct influence is traced by Widdowson (1997) to the extensive programme of workshops by the Council of Europe (1984-87) which complemented the Threshold Level syllabuses for European languages (van Ek and Trim 1991). This programme upheld a new orientation to teacher education, giving primacy to teachers’ roles, denying the authority of imposed theory and recognising the validity of ideas generated from practical experience. These interactive procedures in SLTE have been illustrated over the past decade in the work of the *Oxford Teacher Development Series for Language Teachers* and the *Cambridge Teacher Training and Development Series*. They appear to have set the current trend of the kind of teaching procedures being favoured in SLTE—involving teachers more directly and getting them to participate in the exploration of ideas in relation to their practical concerns. Indeed Stenhouse (passim) has emphasised the reflection by teachers on their everyday activities and of using the critical habit of enquiry into practice which he has termed ‘research as a basis for teaching’ (Stenhouse in Rudduck and Hopkins 1985).

This strategy attempts to work at the level of awareness-raising and understanding rather than at a mere accretion of skills and knowledge and in so doing, recognises the need to guard against monistic answers to pluralistic problems. The interactive, reflective orientation of these procedures upholds the relationship of existing knowledge and prior knowledge as well as the relevance of context to make sense of new information by trainee-teachers. These are based on *cognitive-connectionist-constructivist* orientations (see section 2.1.3) which views learning in terms of building connections between prior knowledge and new ideas involving a continuous active construction and reconstruction of experiences developed in relation to context and facilitated with external support.

Applied to teacher education, it is assumed that student teachers invent and construct knowledge based on their prior experiences and hence, instead of mere instruction by authoritative trainers, there has arisen the need for understanding and discovering, what is being proposed here as the enquiry-oriented approach. However, it has to be emphasised that in developing contexts like Bangladesh, cultural imperatives may require that it be appropriated into a more acceptable form (this is taken up in section 4.3.3 and chapter 7 *passim*).

Under this enquiry-oriented mode, particularly within in-service courses, the focus is increasingly on *awareness raising* which is, as Underhill (1993) and Edge (1994) advocate, one of the central purposes of teacher education. This is attempted through analysis, questioning and reflection and by relating to personal contexts so as to understand the relationship between what Wallace (1991) calls *experiential* and *received* knowledge. Thus pathways are attempted by trainers or educators who serve as facilitators, to build bridges between theoretical constructs and actual classroom practices so as to enable teachers to develop an organised set of concepts underlying a theory of teaching.

Some of the interactive approaches that are attempting to broaden the range of enquiry-oriented interpretive activities in SLTE are:

- the practice of 'diary' or 'journal writing' of trainee-teacher experiences in order to promote reflection (Bailey 1990, Jarvis 1992, McDonough 1994)

- the use of video/audio recordings of lessons as input for analysis and broadening understanding of teaching processes (Ramani 1987, Laycock and Bunnag 1991, Cullen 1991b, 1995, Borg 1998)
- the analysis of 'critical incidents' i.e. key incidents that have a particular significance for teachers (Calderhead 1988, Tripp 1993)
- the exploration of 'case studies' (Britten 1985, Yin 1994)
- 'teachers' narratives' as a basis for theory development (Clarke 1992)
- 'stimulated recall' as a method of promoting research on teaching (Calderhead 1981, Clark and Peterson 1986).

Especially valuable is the group effort, the sharing and analysing of experiences and the collaborative working on tasks and projects which has been termed variously as 'co-operative development' (Edge 1992) or 'collaborative development' (Lansley 1994) or 'self-awareness in groups' (Underhill 1992) or 'collaborative dialogue' (Bailey 1996). Further, Widdowson (1990) suggests 'portfolios' or 'fascicules of data and tasks' that represent modules of enquiry based on teachers' perceptions of what they find problematic in their own teaching contexts which then serve as points of departure in need of clarification and resolution. This is further illustrated in task-based activities for teachers as advocated by Doff (1988b) and Parrott (1993) among others. All these involve on the one hand, an opportunity for teachers 'to tell their stories' and on the other, to analyse their experiences. Richards and Lockhart (1996) maintain that reflective teaching goes hand in hand with critical self-examination and reflection as a basis for decision-making, planning and action. In short, teachers are urged to recognise the validity of ideas generated from practical experience and in the process interact between theory and practice or even to be theorists in their own rights as urged by Prabhu (1990, 1995).

### **3.3 Education and training: key concepts**

Till quite recently *teacher training* was the term used almost universally for all types of formal teacher education programmes both pre-service and in-service. In many developing countries, as in Bangladesh, it is still used without any implications of impropriety. Although the terms 'teacher training' and 'teacher education' are

sometimes still used interchangeably to refer to the professional preparation of teachers<sup>25</sup>, a distinction between the concepts *training* and *education* has been drawn.

The *training* phenomenon, working within a transmission perspective of knowledge, has been the form traditionally favoured for teacher instruction. It became strengthened with the ‘process-product’ research agenda which focused on the behaviour of ‘effective’ teachers and the relationship between teacher behaviour and student learning. A number of aspects of so-called effective teaching were described and used as a basis for models of teaching in education (Joyce and Weil 1972). A basic assumption of this process-product approach was that teaching could be characterised by recurring patterns of behaviour with the teaching process viewed in terms of a repertoire of strategies which could be transmitted in teacher preparation programmes as a set of competencies to trainee-teachers.

However, it soon became evident that this was a highly unsatisfactory approach. In mainstream education, Jackson (1968) critiqued training as adhering to the ‘engineering’ concept in education. He denounced the training of teachers from this ‘engineering’ point of view in which procedures were devised to influence unthinking habit-formation with an emphasis on skills and techniques thus following the imitative craft model of professional development aimed at a static society. Jackson pointed to the existence of multiple ‘hidden agendas’ and the need for the acceptance of teachers’ options and decision-making abilities. This was rejecting training as a conditioning form of learning based on a behavioural philosophy, in favour of a cognitive one.

The idea of *education* was a natural backlash to the inadequacies seen in *training* to deal with a phenomenon that demanded a more non-linear approach. Stimulated by cognitive and constructivist orientations of knowledge processes and the ethnographic approach to the classroom which pointed to a culture of constant flux within which the dynamics of learning were to be pursued, new ways of dealing with the teaching provisions of the trainee-teacher began to be discussed. It was felt teachers should no longer be *trained*. Instead they needed *education*.

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<sup>25</sup> Interestingly, ELT publications sometimes use both terms *education* and *training*—perhaps with an eye on the world market. Wallace’s (1991) book, e.g., is entitled “*Training Foreign Language Teachers*”.



In EFL/ESL teacher education, Widdowson (1979a, 1983, 1990, 1997) has defined the distinction between the two concepts. The purpose of education is presented as integrative, providing teachers with versatile and adaptable abilities in order to enable them to relate particular tasks to a more general context of significance. On the other hand, the purpose of training is seen as instrumental, providing the trainee with a set of skills to carry out specific tasks relating to the job in hand within a well-defined role. Given the same course content, the two modes would deal with them differently – education would adopt an explorative approach while training would exploit the course content to achieve its predetermined skills-based goals. In this sense “conformity was the goal of training and creativity the goal of education” (Widdowson 1983:19). The difference is summed up thus:

The traditional term *teacher training*, for example seems to be solution oriented, and to carry the implication that teachers are to be given specific instruction in practical techniques to cope with predictable events, whereas *teacher education* seems to be problem oriented, and to imply a broader intellectual awareness of theoretical principles underlying particular practices.  
(Widdowson 1997: 121)

Therefore, the position taken up here and shared by many others (Jarvis 1977, Brumfit 1979, 1983b, Larsen-Freeman 1983, Britten 1985, Richards and Nunan 1990, Wallace 1991, Wright 1992, Freeman and Richards 1993, 1996, Edge 1994, Ur 1996, Richards 1998), reveals the inadequacies of prescriptivism to a setting which is complex and unpredictable. In the sphere of general education, Lawrence Stenhouse’s work has championed the cause of the educational perspective in pedagogy. He emphasises the element of the indeterminacy of knowledge and the difficulty of transferring it in the instructional process. He therefore distinguishes between the educated and the uneducated use of ‘instruction’ and, in a sense, extracts the very essence of the term ‘education’:

The uneducated use [of instruction] mistakes information for knowledge. Information is not knowledge until the factor of error, limitation or crudity in it is appropriately estimated, and it is assimilated to structures of thinking.  
(Stenhouse in Rudduck and Hopkins 1985: 118)

### 3.3.1 Holistic versus atomistic approaches

Britten (1985) points out that the distinction between the two terms *education* and *training* has arisen from a *holistic* as opposed to a *competency-based* approach to the goals of SLTE. A holistic approach works towards goals that cannot always be broken down into objectives and stresses the development of personal qualities of creativity, judgement and adaptability. On the other hand, competency-based teacher education fulfils all the criteria of the atomistic skills-based approach. It requires a public statement in operational form of all the exit requirements of a training course. These pre-determined objectives are based on needs analysis of the roles teachers are expected to play in relation to the task of teaching (Lee 1977). Norris (1977), however, claims that the TESOL Guidelines for the preparation of ESOL teachers are of the holistic type where the list of topics and experiences are not intended to be exhaustive or limiting but only broadly suggestive of the content of each instructional component.

A strong criticism of this atomistic approach is aimed specifically at the top-down impositional approach which fails to appreciate teacher perspectives. Again Jackson (1968) was among the first to point out that the behavioural objectives in atomistic teaching assumes that the improvement of teaching depends solely on the willingness of large numbers of teachers to heed to these pedagogical canons and behave accordingly (the conditioning element) and an outgrowth of the same methodological position has been the nature of textbooks, the curricula materials and the objective tests.

In mainstream education, in spite of telling censures (by Bullough and Gitlin 1994 among others), Hargreaves and Fullan (1992) maintain this training orientation of the competency-based atomistic approach is still a dominant paradigm in planned teacher development in current school systems in Britain. It is seen as practical, tangible, and since it focuses on methods, it is understandable and useable by teachers. It is also favoured by administrators as programmes are easily organised, packaged and are relatively self-contained. Hargreaves and Fullan argue that if there were indeed a confident and secure knowledge base of effective teaching available, there would automatically be a valid case for training teachers in these skills-based methods and the focus then would be on how best to manage the process of implementation with appropriate sensitivity. However, as I have stressed throughout, the tentative nature of

educational insights to date has created a climate of indeterminacy unable to yield any firm foundation for teacher development.

In SLTE, more than two decades ago, Jarvis (1977: 194), rationalised the merits of the holistic approach to develop “the whole human being”, acknowledging the inability of teacher educators “to be prescriptive by remote control” (Jarvis 1977: 174) and made a strong plea for teacher educators to be responsive to teachers’ needs since an orientation for the future required teachers to be adaptive to the emergence of new circumstances that cannot be predicted. Jarvis argues for shifting responsibility to classroom teachers by giving them the enquiring and analytic skills and the flexibility for making decisions about classroom behaviour. In case of inappropriate decisions being made, teachers have to be able to fathom why and move on with alternatives and above all, to remain receptive to changes and continue to be able to learn how to learn. This clearly foreshadows Widdowson’s (1990) proposal of the mediational role for the practising teacher and what Wallace (1993) has called ‘a professional dynamic’ in teachers. Wallace distinguishes between *static* versus *dynamic* professionalism. The stance adopted in the former is essentially reactive with the responsibility for change abiding in others while in the latter, teachers take on the responsibility for change upon themselves and therefore are able to continue their development beyond a formal course.

### **3.3.2 The necessity for a combined approach**

Despite the dichotomous relationship between the notions of training and education painted so sharply, there is a gradual acknowledgement that some skills-based knowledge may be necessary for the language teacher. Widdowson (1990, 1997) concedes that at the beginning stage, tricks of the pedagogic trade in a training orientation are required for a number of reasons: with no prior experience, novice teachers need to be initiated into the mysteries of their craft and gain confidence, feel secure and acquire membership through a process of acculturation. Larsen-Freeman (1983) and Ur (1996) offer a further reason – beginning teachers should avoid reinventing the wheel where simple classroom procedures are concerned. Ur (1992) maintains the development of unreflective automatic classroom habits is also a necessary part of professional learning—learned mainly through imitation, trial and

error, and intuitive habit—and teachers can not effectively function without them. Wallace (1991, citing Clarke 1983) cautions that even brief and superficial techniques are not quite as easy to identify as there are a wide range of variables in learning contexts. Moving on to specific contexts in the developing world, some of which operate within dysfunctional settings, it is possible to put forth other reasons for maintaining a training orientation while the educational aspect is dealt with in a contextually appropriate manner (see chapter 7).

With the realisation that SLTE ideas might be manifesting the baby-bathwater syndrome with regard to the training perspective, a more balanced approach has been advocated (Larsen-Freeman 1983, Britten 1985). Larsen-Freeman (1983), without objecting to the term *training*, upholds the open-ended individual-oriented goal of *education* and although training is accepted as being situation-oriented with finite objectives and conformist learning, it is felt that the training process could be subsumed under the education process particularly in pre-service courses. In this sense, education includes training. The two perspectives might even exist on a continuum where both the micro and the macro dimensions of teaching could be addressed. Activities and learning experiences in the micro domain reflect the training view where teaching is broken down into discrete skills such as observable behaviour in classrooms like setting up small-group activities, using referential questions, monitoring time-on-task, etc. At the macro-domain level, the educational perspective focuses on clarifying and elucidating these practices and on determining the appropriacy of their application to specific contexts. Thus practices and principles are made to interact. Pennington (1990) argues for a trainable ‘repertoire of skills’ and, more generatively, the educated judgement to apply and transfer those skills. Head and Taylor (1997), too, see training and development as complementary components of a fully rounded teacher education where external knowledge or skill is accompanied by internal insight. Such an approach automatically demands a redefinition of both teacher-educator and student-teacher roles.

The student teacher must adopt the role of autonomous learner and researcher, in addition to that of apprentice. The role of the teacher educator is no longer simply that of trainer; he or she must guide the student teacher in the process of generating and testing hypotheses and in using the knowledge so acquired as a basis for further development. (Richards 1990a:15)

But too often, as cautioned by Hargreaves and Fullan (1992), the rhetoric suggests bottom-up development while reality reveals top-down implementation.

### **3.3.3 Professional development**

The criteria and standards set up in the educational and holistic approach to teacher education can and do make assertions to a status of professionalism for language teachers (see section 2.2.5). Indeed there is a general consensus about teacher development and the canons of professionalism which includes the notion of a commitment to an occupation through conscientious workmanship or the application of skilful work to a high standard of performance (Maley 1992).

In a dynamic and supportive setting, this engaging in an endeavour of high levels of competence and quality would include an independent discerning outlook able to formulate and implement autonomous decisions. Richards and Nunan (1990) maintain:

Given the inadequacies of prescriptivism, it is incumbent upon teacher preparation programs to work towards the ideal of the autonomous practitioner, that is, someone who is able to draw on knowledge and skills in making on-line decisions to solve problems that are unique to a particular teaching situation.  
(Richards and Nunan 1990:2)

This ability to make on-line decisions is perhaps the single most significant factor that elevates the teacher to the status of a professional. A teacher's professional development is pivotal for a wider concept of thoroughgoing and continuing *teacher development* as described by Widdowson (1990), Lange (1990) and Wallace (1993).

Teacher development is a term used to describe a process of continual intellectual, experiential and attitudinal growth of teachers some of which is generated in pre-professional and professional in-service programs. In using the term development, the intent here is to suggest that teachers continue to evolve in the use, adaptation, and application of their art and craft.  
(Lange 1990: 250)

Pennington (1990:150) lists the following as the primary goals of continuing career growth and individualised differences for second language teachers:

- a knowledge of the theoretical base of the field in language learning and classroom research;
- informed knowledge of self and students;
- attitudes of flexibility and openness to change;
- decision-making and communication skills;
- the analytic skills necessary for assessing different teaching situations and the changing conditions in the classroom;
- awareness of alternative teaching approaches and the ability to put these into practice;
- the confidence and skills to alter one's teaching approach as needed;
- practical experiences with different teaching approaches.

By the same token, Wallace (1993) argues that it is incumbent on teacher educators in an SLTE programme to create *a professional dynamic* in trainee-teachers in such a way that it can be maintained through the rest of their professional careers. Kumaravadivelu (1994) sees this as empowering teachers with knowledge, skill and autonomy.

It is interesting to note that in the very societies that have nurtured a strong lobby for teacher professionalism and teacher autonomy (see, too, issues from 'critical theory' in section 2.2.6), a fresh threat to teacher professionalism appears to be surfacing. This has not come from any shift in educational perspective, but ironically, from the pursuit of institutional professionalism itself. White (1998) points to the presence of multiple stake-holders in the ELT 'business' and the resultant demand for bureaucratisation of accountability in the quest for quality. This is, paradoxically, jeopardising process and professionalism in favour of product and craft skills.

### **3.4 Models of second language teacher education**

Notwithstanding a lack of persuasive evidence regarding indispensable elements of an effective programme for preparing second language teachers, it is seen that new ideas are emerging that challenge old ways of thinking. These are providing renewed insights to evaluate existing practices, understand their effectiveness and decide on new directions. Drawing on the ideas and theories that have formed the input for language teaching and for educating language teachers, I now consider three historical models of

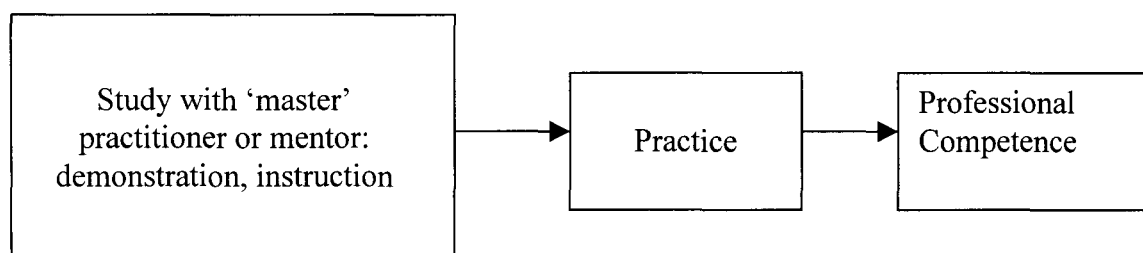
professional education identified by Wallace (1991) and integrate them into models of SLTE. They are:

- *the craft model*
- *the applied science model*
- *the reflective model*

A model is formulated when an informed attempt is made to work out a principled approach to the solution of practical problems, the problem in this case being how best to educate second or foreign language teachers to carry out their jobs effectively.

### 3.4.1 The craft model

Associated with the craft guilds of the Middle Ages, this model was traditionally followed till about the end of the Second World War. Here the notion is that of the expert practitioner passing down the skills of the *craft* to the apprentice who learns by imitating and following instructions. The relationship is that of mentor and novice where the latter is a passive recipient of information and skills (Figure 3.1). Stones and Morris (1972 cited in Wallace 1991) take a narrow view of craft and disparagingly call it the ‘sitting with Nellie’ syndrome drawing an analogy with the hands-on training of assembly line workers in factories (see section 2.1.1).



**Figure 3.1: The craft model of professional education (based on Wallace 1991)**

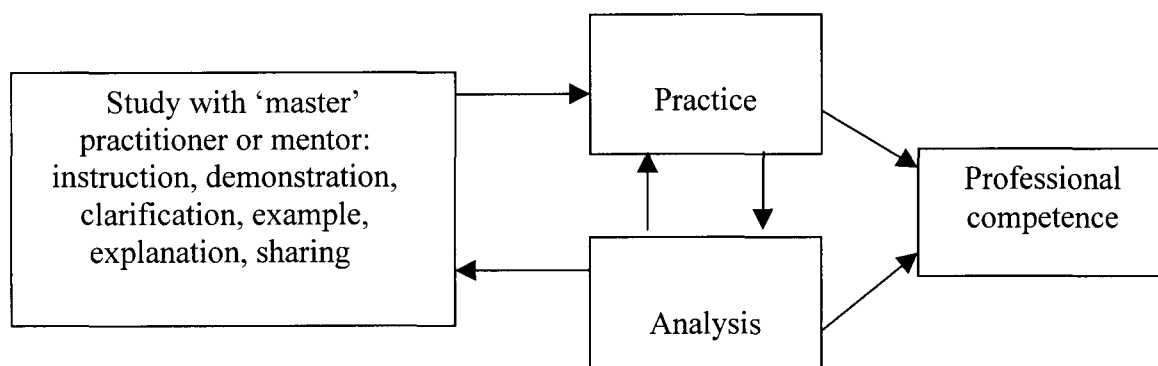
In language teacher education the craft model can be paralleled to the skills-based approach under the patronage of the expert educator symbolising the ‘master practitioner’, demonstrating examples and giving authoritative instructions on the ‘craft’ of teaching i.e. the tricks of the trade. Although the concept of the ‘master’ practitioner has a traditional, even romantic appeal, it nevertheless assumes a society which is static and accepting, and knowledge as objective, finite and value-free. In this

sense, the craft or commonsense approach needs to be rejected because it denies the significance of the principles on which good teaching depends — most importantly, there is no coherent theory of teaching and what is evident is a focus on the micro approach to teacher preparation.

Relating the craft model to mainstream teacher education, Stenhouse (1975 cited in Wallace 1991) revives a *stronger* version of the craft model of professional development where multiple complexities of the craft make it difficult to explain what goes on in the actual teaching process. Carr and Kemmis (1986) and Lyons (1990) share this view, maintaining that the dimensions of the teacher's craft are, on the one hand, traditionally set by expectations about outcomes, while on the other, much depends on the environment in which the work is set, thus emphasising the significance of specific contexts.

K. Richards (1994) further advocates that the narrow static view of craft arises from a whipping-boy stance which fails to take into account a sense of community, sharing and dialogue. He argues that the mentor-novice relationship can be a dynamic one and can facilitate professionalism through the discursual processes of explanation, example and exchange. Nunan (1990b), for example, describes an early teacher development scheme in Australia where experienced teachers were appointed as support personnel for new teachers and sensitively enacted non-threatening mentor roles. The formation of “professional development schools” (see section 7.3.1) as authentic environments for preparing teachers has come to be favoured in recent times. This is illustrated by Gebhard (1990a), Wallace and Woolger (1991), Moon (1994) and Barone et al. (1996) who use carefully selected site-based mentors to share the responsibility for assisting new teachers to articulate, problematise and operationalise the understanding of pedagogic acts. Richards (1998) furthermore suggests that exposing novice teachers to the cognitive skills of expert teachers is valuable. Kontra (1997) advocates going beyond mere imitation, to application within one's own context thus linking craft and awareness. Within this perspective then, if the ‘sitting with Nellie’ mentor scheme is treated in an analytic and discursive manner helping trainee-teachers to deconstruct a teaching incident and to develop insights, the craft model acquires macro dimensional attributes (Figure 3.2). Interestingly enough, Wallace (1991) would consider this a *reflective* approach to the craft model (see section 3.4.3).





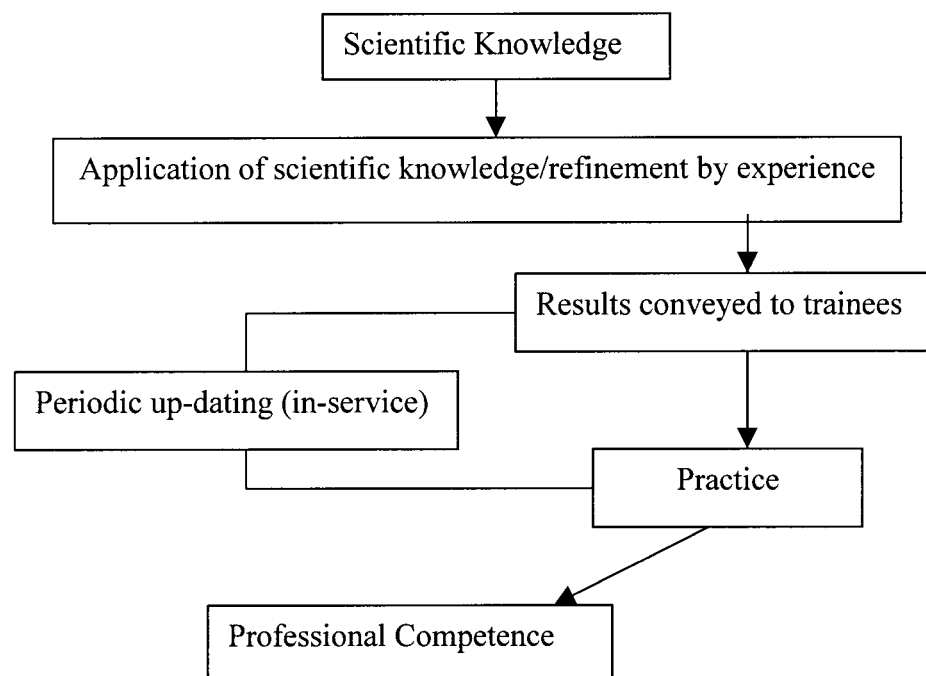
**Figure 3.2: A macro-dimensional craft model of SLTE**

Although it appears that the craft model can transcend the narrow, static view generally associated with it and has a potential to operate on a broader agenda in ways compatible with a holistic approach, no SLTE model today would deem it appropriate to be based on the craft model of professional development, particularly in its conservative notion of novice teachers working under a ‘master’ professional. The possibility that the craft model is being followed intuitively in much of the skills-based teacher education courses in many parts of the world today is food for thought. Widdowson (1997) observes that the need for cheap teacher supply and a general distrust of abstract theorising can lead in some countries to an apprenticeship concept of teacher preparation where prospective teachers pick up their expertise from practising teachers in schools, with almost no input from academic institutions—a radical form of the training concept leading to “intellectual impoverishment and diminished prestige” (Widdowson 1997: 124).

### **3.4.2 The applied science model**

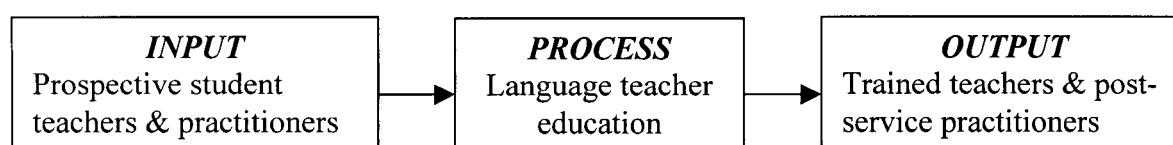
This model of professional education developed under the influence of the empirical sciences in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Practical knowledge in a profession is a matter of relating the most appropriate means derived on a scientific basis by applying a body of theoretical and practical knowledge to the desired objectives. Working on a ‘technical rationalist’ paradigm, the whole issue revolves around instrumentality. In its narrow sense, it is a top-down unilateral process where scientific knowledge is applied to a problem, refined by experimentation and the results are put into practice to facilitate and develop competence. There is also periodic updating in-built within the programme just as there is provision for expansion and change within

the knowledge base itself leading on to further training (Figure 3.3). Again the experts or ‘thinkers’ are separate from the practitioners or ‘doers’.



**Figure 3.3. The applied science model of professional education (Wallace 1991)**

As an example of an applied science model in SLTE, I consider the model suggested by Stern (1983b). This model, represented as a simple *input-process-output* model, considers initial training and in-service training as working with the same set of clientele at different points of time but along a single continuum (Figure 3.4).

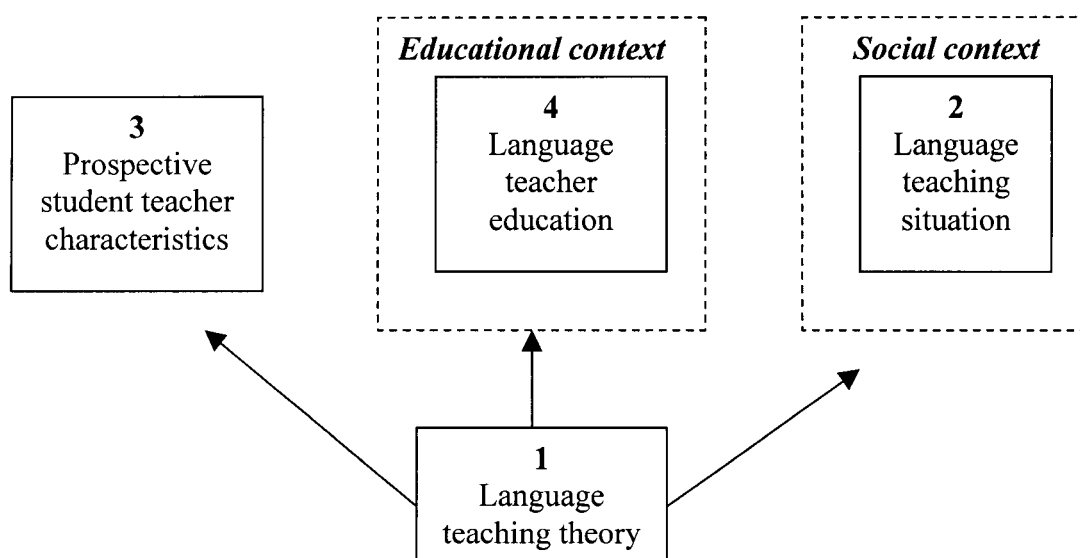


**Figure 3.4: The input-process-output model underlying the applied science approach**

Prospective language teachers approach training with certain qualities and background experiences some of which may be useful in their work. SLTE is intended to develop those requisite qualities that they do not possess and to strengthen those they already have. Questions that answer which qualities student teachers already have and which need to be developed provide a basis for the curriculum, in other words, *the input box*. The main problem in setting up a valid programme lies in making these judgements and

interpretations realistically. The process cell may provide a variety of programmes and activities of varying lengths of time.

The ‘process’ box is determined through a four-fold analysis which is represented in Figure 3.5. Stern has placed *language teaching theory* at the base, arguing that “theory is basic for all decisions and judgement to be made in LTE” (Stern 1983b: 349). Language teaching theory is understood as a comprehensive construct which comprises the systematic body of knowledge, beliefs and interpretations that enter into decision-making and judgements about language teaching. A *language teaching theory* thus implies a view of the nature of language, a concept of language learning, an awareness of social context, an interpretation of teaching in general, and a view of language pedagogy. It may be pointed out here that what Stern is claiming to be a *language teaching theory* is actually conflated with elements identified in the literature with a *language learning theory*.



**Figure 3.5: An applied science model of SLTE (Stern 1983b)**

However, the emphasis by Stern on the issues of social and the educational contexts as well as the specificities associated with second language pedagogy is significant in terms of current thought (see sections 2.1.5, 2.1.6 for a discussion on social and educational contexts). More importantly, Stern (1983b: 349) cautions, “Theory is not to be understood as fixed or final, but as a constantly evolving body of thought, concepts, beliefs, values and knowledge”. He further emphasises the importance of recognising

that academic studies, initial pre-service training, internship and early and advanced professional experience form a continuum of professional development.

It is interesting to note that although Stern's model takes into account relevant factors such as student-teacher characteristics and the teaching situation within social and educational contexts, the emphasis nevertheless remains on *language teaching theory* as evident from the mono-directional arrows emanating from the box at the bottom of figure 3.5 thus rejecting the possibility or the desirability of a bi-directional flow of insights and information (see sections 3.2, 3.3). This is rather odd because Stern has stated that a language teaching theory that ignores linguistics and the human sciences is 'unthinkable' and yet the 'human sciences' are evidently subservient. Again he assumes the availability of a valid systematic body of knowledge that constitutes an effective *language teaching theory*—a point that has been questioned and debated in my discussions throughout.

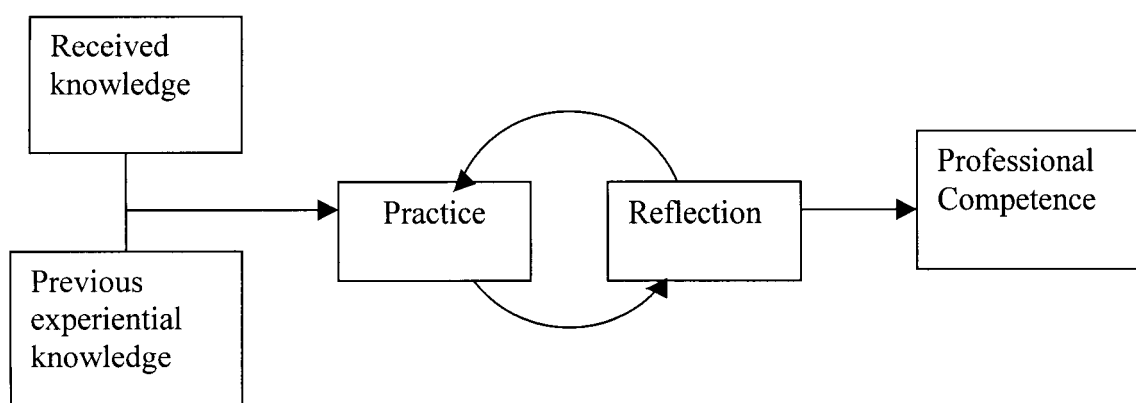
The difficulty in this model therefore lies in the following:

- a. The unfounded faith in the knowledge base which we currently understand as being insufficient and partly unreliable. Linguistics and its feeder disciplines have NOT been able to provide a comprehensive knowledge base for language teaching pedagogy (see section 2.1.2). Moreover, as pointed out by Freeman (1994), it cannot be assumed that disciplinary knowledge can be equated with teaching knowledge.
- b. Granting that a systematic body of reliable knowledge was available, the indications of a top-down presentation of the theoretical input implies that trainees receive knowledge in a reactive role. Although actual procedures are unclarified, such a principle in the model framework lends itself to a didactic view of teaching.
- c. A wider implication of a top-down principle is the lack of recognition of certain important issues. Firstly, the unidirectional arrow prevents a complementary theory-practice interface (see section 3.1.3) thus inhibiting open-ended approaches towards cognitive or interactionist modes of learning. Secondly, the top-down approach assumes, as stated by Jackson (1968), a body of teachers willing to be conditioned into these pedagogical canons and behave accordingly. This goes against the findings on teacher cognition and thinking processes (see section 2.2.1).

Nevertheless, in spite of its technical-rationalist ethos, input from applied disciplines is very much a part of any professional course today. The only difference would be in the manner this knowledge was presented to course participants. However, as a model of SLTE, Wallace (1991) contends it is perhaps the most influential one to underpin any current professional education programme. In Bangladesh, at least, this may be true.

### 3.4.3 The reflective model

Although the role of reflection in second language teaching is not a new phenomenon (see McTaggart and Kemmis 1983, Gore 1987, Bartlett 1990, Swan 1993, Ellis 1993), Wallace (1991) presents the *reflective model* of SLTE (see figure 3.6). He claims it is a compromise model as it gives equal emphasis both to experience and to the scientific basis of the profession. It is based on the reflective model of general professional development and takes its cue from Schön's (1983, 1987) notion of the 'reflective practitioner' (see also the theoretical influences on reflective practices in teacher education traced by Calderhead 1989 in section 3.2.3).

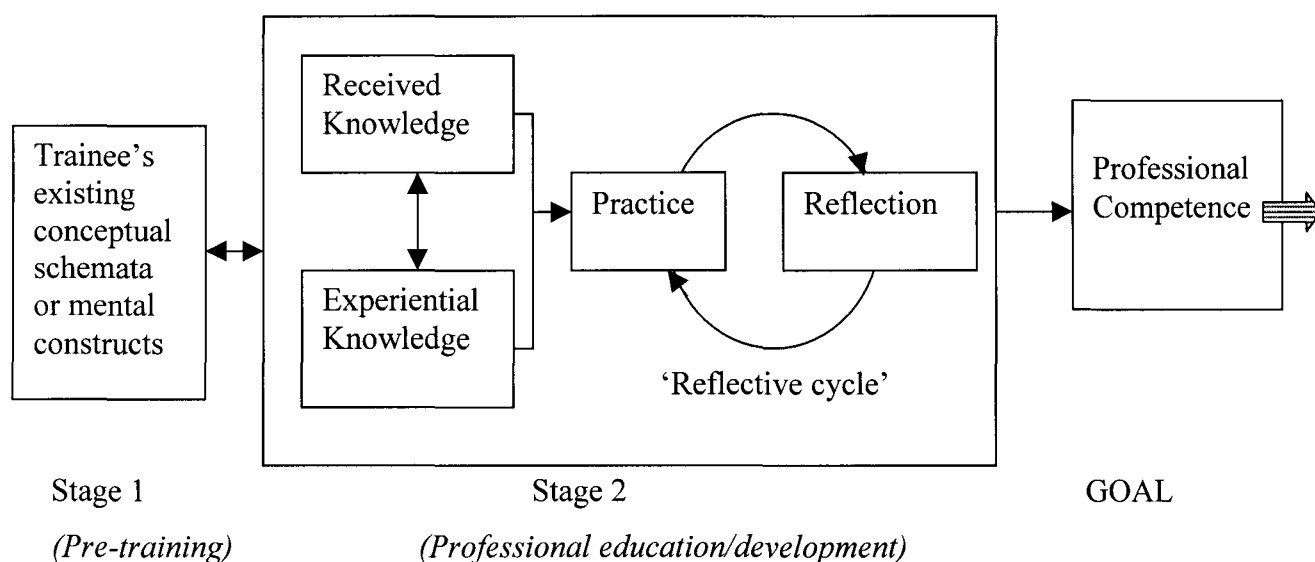


**Figure 3.6: The reflective model of professional education (Wallace 1991)**

Professional education is seen as having two dimensions – Wallace calls them *received knowledge* and *experiential knowledge*. *Received knowledge* is the sum-total of all ideas and theories, either research-based, speculative or dictated by tradition or convention which trainees 'receive' rather than 'experience' and which is part of the necessary intellectual content of the profession. *Experiential knowledge* is seen as that which applies to direct and vicarious forms of experience and which is developed by practice of the profession and by reflecting on it. While *received knowledge* acquaints

the trainee with knowledge of concepts and skills, *experiential knowledge* is seen as being gained through a combination of Schön's (1983) *knowing-in-action* and *reflection* phenomenon. The important aspect is a "continuing cycle of practice and reflection leading to a dynamic developmental concept of 'professional competence'" (Wallace 1991: 59).

Applied to SLTE, Wallace presents a slightly modified and expanded version of this model. The process of professional education in this scheme goes through two stages, the pre-training stage and the professional education/development stage thus working towards a single goal, that of increased professional competence (see Figure 3.7). It is interesting to note the continuing arrow from the final box indicating that professional competence is not a terminal point but a continuous process of development.



**Figure 3.7: A reflective model of SLTE (Wallace 1991)**

Stage 1: This is the pre-training stage i.e. the stage prior to beginning the course (pre-service or in-service) which takes into account all previous mental constructs, what Macleod and McIntyre (1977) call '*conceptual schemata*'. It includes ideas, beliefs, attitudes, all of which shape human behaviour in various typical and consistent ways. This is particularly significant as it recognises teacher thinking as an integral part of teacher behaviour and educational socialisation. This acceptance and active interaction with previously held mental constructs gives SLTE an important dimension, something

that it hitherto lacked. This is a significant development in line with a constructivist approach which recognises teacher cognitions (section 2.2.1) in an interactionist theory of learning.

Stage 2: This is the stage of professional education and development where *received* and *experiential knowledge* interact with each other and with previous schemata in a cyclical process of *practice* and *reflection*, the desired goal being increased professional competence. It may be pointed out that ‘practice’ includes both direct and also vicarious forms like observation, watching lesson videos, reading lesson transcripts, micro-teaching, etc. The ‘reflective cycle’ is a continuing process shown by the interdependent arrows in Figure 3.7 in relation to practice and reflection. The reflection in terms of professional concerns may take place before the practice or during the practice itself: ‘reflection-in action’, or afterwards through a process of recollection and problematisation.

The point that is being highlighted .....is that it is the *practice* element which is the central focus of the knowledge base on the one hand and the reflective process on the other.  
(Wallace 1991: 56) (emphasis in original)

Although personal experience is not downplayed, Wallace (1991: 54) emphasises “the complementary importance of shared experience of practice in teacher education courses at all levels and in discussion of such practice being focussed along shared parameters”. Wallace’s interface between received and experiential knowledge and the continual reflection-in-action provides a stimulating framework for not only relating theory and practice in a reciprocal light but also for the notion of ‘teacher research’ as a logical extension of reflective practice. In its strategic format and its desired outcomes, it echoes the mediational approach of teacher development proposed by Widdowson (1990) – see section 3.4.4.

Wallace argues that the reflective model is based on a widely accepted general professional model which is grounded on a broad base of professional knowledge and experience and is also consistent with other developments in language teaching with an emphasis on the learner and learner training (Ellis and Sinclair 1989) – see section 2.1.3. He further points to the advantage of empowering teachers to manage their own

professional development and to deal with educational innovation which has been hitherto seen as a threat to teachers' established practices (see section 2.1.7).

This framework of teacher development has been adopted by a number of influential second language educators such as Richards and Lockhart (1996), Ur (1996), Medgyes and Malderez (1996). It is interesting to understand the role of the trainer or educator in this approach. Whereas in the craft and the applied science models, the trainer is in an authoritative role in control of the knowledge to be gained by the trainee, in the reflective model, the trainer is cast in the role of a facilitator and guide as discussed in section 3.2.3 under the enquiry-oriented approach.

In spite of the widespread recognition of the benefits of this approach and its popularity as a teacher education model, Calderhead (1989, 1992) cautions that its efficiency is in doubt with *novice* teachers as they generally interact at a fairly superficial level. The reflective approach (with novice teachers at least) appears to present a kind of catch-22 situation – teachers need to have a certain level of heightened awareness and understanding to be able to reflect effectively; on the other hand, teachers do not develop this heightened awareness unless they can reflect. Calderhead goes on to suggest that there is, therefore, a need for research to probe areas which can provide a testing ground for current ideas of reflection and an insight into how reflection might figure in the task of learning to teach. Such research is currently making some headway, as in Freeman and Richards (1996). Meanwhile the reflective model appears to be gaining considerable ground in SLTE particularly since it is seen as moving into the realm of a 'practice-based' profession.

#### **3.4.4 A model of mediation**

The craft model in its traditional sense deals with skills and ignores research as such, the applied science model reserves research for the privileged domain of academics whose work in theoretical and applied linguistics provide solutions for SLTE. The reflective model uses research insights as contributing to received knowledge although Wallace (1991, 1998) does approve of the formative nature of action research (defined as an extension of the normal reflective practice of teachers) and recommends it as one of the strategies available to teachers for continuous professional development.

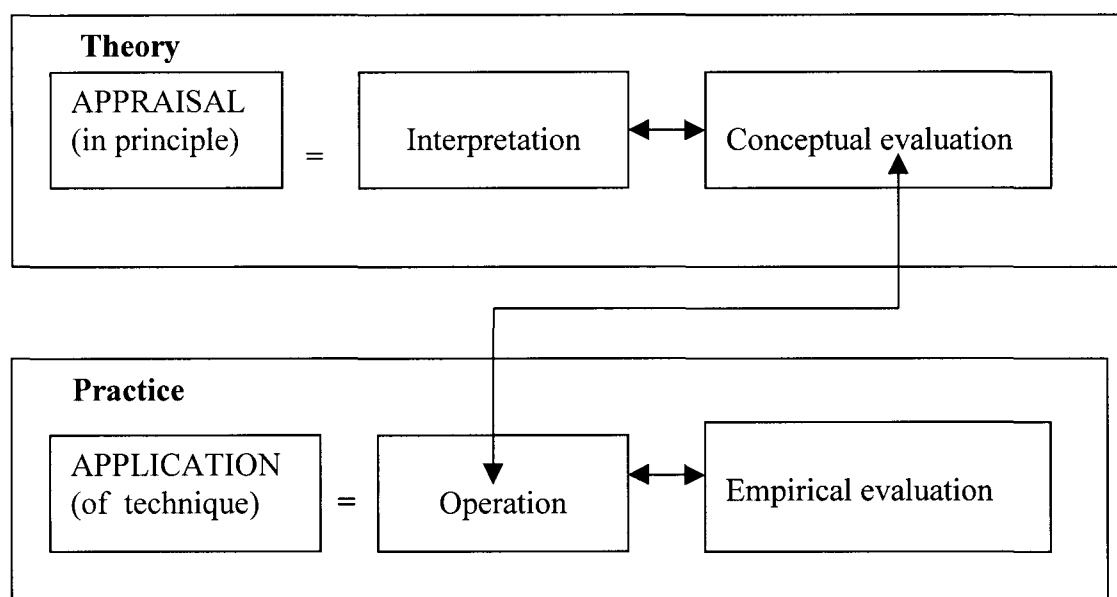


On the other hand, Widdowson (1990), not particularly enamoured of action research as understood in current teacher development literature, sees the classroom practitioner as a researcher in essence – a *mediator* of theory. It is the teacher as an individual who has to act as the mediator between theory and practice, between the domains of disciplinary research and pedagogy. Widdowson (1990: 30) calls this mediating role “the pragmatics of language pedagogy”. Pragmatism is the function of pedagogic mediation whereby the relationship between theory and practice, ideas and their actualisation, can be realised only by application in the immediate activity of teaching. Disapproving of theory being unilateral and non-reflexive and the teacher experiencing “second order realization” of new ideas, Widdowson argues for a reflexive, interdependent relationship between theory and practice i.e. actualising abstract ideas in practical outcomes. The benefit is two-fold:

The realization of this relationship in the act of teaching (which I maintain is the only way it can be effectively realised) has reciprocal effects. On the one hand it provides for the possibility of improved techniques for bringing about learning; on the other it provides a rationale whereby such techniques can be explicitly identified as exemplars of more general principles of teaching. Seen in this way, the reflexive nature of pragmatism, with theory realised in practice, practice informed by theory, brings mutual benefits in that it serves the cause both of effective learning and as a corollary, of the professional development of the teacher.  
(Widdowson 1990:30)

Similarities may be drawn between Widdowson’s approach and Wallace’s interface between *received* and *experiential* knowledge through *practice* and *reflection*. Although Widdowson sees the teacher as *a researcher* in principle and Wallace more modestly calls him *a reflector*, the ‘reflexivity’ of the process of enquiry and the ultimate goal of a continuous professional development puts the two models at par. Nevertheless, Wallace’s pre-training stage which takes account of trainee teachers’ existing mental constructs is absent in Widdowson’s model of mediation. Moreover, the *shared* experience of practice and reflection that Wallace emphasises is replaced (except perhaps in in-service programmes) by individual analysis of rationale and principles by Widdowson. Whereas Wallace’s model is wide-ranging and caters both to beginning and practising teachers, Widdowson appears to target teachers who have moved well into the second stage of the reflective model. Consequently the model of

mediation offered in an in-service situation, may be seen more as a model of language *teaching* by highly sophisticated professionals than a model of *SLTE* as such.



**Figure 3.8: The process of mediation in language teaching (Widdowson 1990)**

The mediational approach involves two interdependent pragmatic processes - *appraisal* and *application* (Figure 3.8). *Appraisal* focuses on theory and consists of interpretation of ideas in terms of their original reference followed by an evaluation of these ideas in terms of their relevance and transfer value to other contexts. *Application* focuses on practice and is also seen as a two-stage process. Ideas are put into operation in the classroom and then the practical effects are evaluated. Thus *appraisal* is a *conceptual evaluation* of the ideas proposed and *application* is an *empirical evaluation* based on the classroom teaching experience. And that is not the end of the matter. For application can lead to *reappraisal*. Thus teaching is seen “as essentially a research activity” (Widdowson 1990: 53). In short, it is a ‘reflection-*in-action*’ model rather than ‘reflection-*on-action*’ as proposed by Wallace, a research-oriented approach to teaching which obviously places a high premium on teacher education.

Widdowson points to a caveat here – there may be mediation failure. The difficulty may lie either in the validity of the principle or in the particular techniques that have been used to operationalise it. However, the indeterminacy of any resolution makes pedagogic mediation “a continuous process of enquiry and experiment” (Widdowson

1990: 32). This is perhaps an advantage as it keeps the teacher constantly alert and promotes the dual purpose of searching out ways of being more effective as well as providing for continuing education.

This approach has important implications for pedagogy. Much of the enthusiasm followed by disenchantment with curricula issues such as approaches, methods, tasks and syllabuses can be traced to a failure in *interpretation* and *conceptual evaluation*. As a result, there has been either assimilation or rejection. But the process of *pragmatic mediation* allows for a sensitive approach – interpretation, appraisal and application, and then through formative evaluation, a *reappraisal* of the principles in terms of relevance and transfer value. Furthermore, predictive hypotheses produced by researchers and theorists can similarly be addressed by the teacher's mediational role in terms of classroom practice for their interpretation, validation and usefulness. The mediational feature qualifies and empowers teachers to make balanced appraisals of all pedagogic dictates on offer and may be considered the ultimate goal of SLTE.

One can immediately see a reason for the celebration of the idea of *education vis-à-vis training*. Nevertheless, the teacher's educative role appears to develop along a continuum with the ability for pragmatic mediation slowly emerging through a continuous process of *reflection*, *appraisal* and *application*. From this perspective, Wallace's reflective model is, in temporal terms, a forerunner of the model of mediation. By its very nature, the mediational approach is valuable within an in-service perspective. This programme would naturally be open-ended with guidelines not directives, providing plenty of opportunities for reflection and appraisal both at the conceptual and at the experiential levels. The teacher's role would be seen as a catalyst stimulating a pragmatic approach in class. Candlin and Widdowson's edited series of books, *Language Teaching: A Scheme for Teacher Education* (1987-1996) claim to operationalise this approach:

The purpose of this scheme of books is to engage language teachers in a process of continual professional development so as to guide teachers towards a critical appraisal of ideas and the informed application of these ideas in their classrooms. The scheme provides the means for the teacher to take the initiative themselves in pedagogic planning. The emphasis is on critical enquiry as a basis for effective action. (Candlin and Widdowson 1992: xii)

### 3.4.5 Towards a statement of principles for SLTE

In this final section I draw on the issues, ideas and arguments developed in my discussion so far regarding the language teacher, language teaching and language teacher education in order to formulate a general organising framework for SLTE. Taking my cue from Brumfit (1979: 2) who said, “No practical problems are ever solved without recourse to principles of some kind”, I attempt to do this, not in terms of theories and models, but in terms of assumptions and principles that may provide a conceptual framework for an approach to any SLTE programme. The principles presented below are in terms of a pre-service programme although they are equally applicable with necessary adjustments to in-service programmes as well.

- a. *The education of second language teachers is a complex non-linear process of development.* Although there is a starting point in temporal terms, there is no perceived completion point thereby indicating that it is an ongoing phenomenon. The implications are two-fold. One, individual teachers need to be aware of and employ self-development strategies and two, education systems need to provide quality in-service programmes on a regular basis.
- b. *Learning ideologies and teaching methodologies should be geared to operationalise this concept of life-long learning.* Hence, atomistic skills-based conditioned forms of teaching are too narrowly conceived; instead, a holistic educational approach to cope with complexities and uncertainties is necessary. This needs to be reflected in the theory of learning/teaching manifest through the course content and the procedures employed to operationalise this content. An educational perspective promotes enquiry, analysis, reflection, evaluation and decision-making. The expected outcomes of such a course of action are adaptability, versatility and creativity in preparation for the unpredictability of classroom demands. Thus experimentation, risk-taking, autonomy and flexibility are the key elements in a teacher development course.
- c. *Trainee-teachers' pre-training mental constructs and beliefs need to be taken account of.* Trainees' knowledge and thought processes are influenced by psychological and ecological contexts. Therefore there is a need to understand trainee-teachers' own learning processes. Trainers need to devise efficient ways on how best to manage the process of training with appropriate sensitivity.

- d. *There needs to be clarity about the theory of teaching/learning (didactic, heuristic, or interactional) applied in the training course.* It should be made explicit not only through exemplification but also through analysis, recognition and articulation. The methodology of the SLTE programme needs to match the theory of teaching /learning being advocated. Thus if a learner-centred, interactional mode is being advocated for language teaching, it would be a paradox for trainers to use a didactic, lecture method advocating a transmission view of learning. Thus teacher trainers need to practice what they preach.
- e. *Trainee-teachers have to be fully aware of the needs, goals and the objectives of the course.* These needs and goals should not be allowed to remain implicit but have to be brought out into the open, interacted with, discussed, challenged and interpreted in terms of one's own conditions of relevance. It has been seen that trainers and trainees often carry on complacently with opposing agendas. This must be avoided at all costs and the agendas of both parties need to converge if any useful outcome is to be expected, the onus evidently being on the trainer.
- f. *The educational ideology of education and the teaching context need to be clarified at the outset.* Current educational ideologies and values as well as classroom and societal practices and specificities of context need to be recognised and understood accurately. In particular, mismatches with the declared ideology of the SLTE programme, if any, need to be drawn out and debated. Most importantly, trainers must guard against any ideological zeal undermining the training process.
- g. *Essential concepts about teachers' and learners' roles need to be understood and developed appropriately.* The following ideas are commonplace in the literature today:
  - Teachers are facilitators and not repositories of knowledge.
  - However, teachers are knowledgeable about the processes to help students to develop their learning.
  - Students are not empty vessels but bring along a baggage of background knowledge and experience.
  - Teachers provide opportunities, resources, support, encouragement and expertise.

However, these concepts need to be clarified with methods and techniques that reflect their ethos. Indeed trainee-teachers need to understand both cognitively and affectively the implications of these concepts on their teaching.

- h. *Awareness-raising is one of the central purposes of teacher education.* Although this element underlies several of the principles mentioned here, it needs to be

emphasised as a single important feature, as awareness is the necessary foundation for all means of development and change.

- i. *Received knowledge, experiential knowledge and trainee-teachers' prior beliefs are the three important components of an SLTE programme.* Unlike an applied science orientation, received knowledge is not seen as providing the knowledge base from a position of authority. Instead, there needs to be a reciprocal approach between received knowledge, experience and prior beliefs. Received knowledge can provide insights which can then be interpreted in terms of prior beliefs and experiential knowledge. This significantly underlies a reciprocal approach to theory and practice.
- j. *Trainee-teachers cannot be left to make their own applications of received knowledge.* Although this principle is subsumed under the previous one, I have presented it as a separate tenet since a great many difficulties have arisen in the past by leaving trainees to formulate their own judgements. Explicit ways need to be formulated for trainees to interact with insights from received knowledge (as suggested above) leading on to new insights and perhaps new attitudes.
- k. *In the case of non-native language teachers, a language improvement component needs to be built into the SLTE course.* It is imperative that second language teachers have a certain standard of target language competency so that they do not pass on structural, functional and pronunciation errors on to their learners.

Although the above do not claim to be an exhaustive list, they nevertheless present a general framework for an SLTE programme. Indeed operating with such principles clarifies the aims, objectives and methodology of the course and increases chances of achieving some success.

### **3.5 Summary and Conclusion**

I have attempted in this chapter to distil the key factors that underpin the concept of SLTE with reference to two major concerns, the *theory-practice* and the *training-education* issues, and in terms of these I have investigated the principal models of professional education available for second language teachers. Based on a discussion of past and current positions and practices in this field, I have subsequently drawn up a set of assumptions and principles underlying SLTE.

It is seen that the difficulties in the *theory-practice* polemic arose mainly from a positivist ethos within the applied science tradition in which teachers were viewed as consumers of theory formulated by academics. In recent constructivist approaches, teachers are being accredited with knowledgeable, autonomous roles which view teachers' knowledge as being formed in terms of experiential and contextual orientations. The current trend favours *theory* and *practice* as existing in an interdependent state, ideally in a complementary, indeed a synergistic relationship. The implications for SLTE point towards provisions for enabling beginning and practising teachers to develop an enhanced ability to mediate between theory and practice.

Concomitant with the theory-practice link, we move from a period of *teacher training* characterised by approaches towards preparing teachers with atomistic techniques and skills, to the current climate of a holistic perspective of *teacher education* where SLTE programmes are increasingly facing pressures to assess the assumptions that underlie practices. In so doing, *training* as a teacher preparation notion is being marginalised and subsumed under the overarching concept of *education*. The *educational* perspective allows the *theory-practice* interface to be taken on board integrating it in a deliberately facilitating programme of continued professional growth.

Although it is recognised that there is as yet no unifying theory of teacher education, the major models of SLTE are subjected to a process of appraisal. It is seen that due to a top-down impositional nature, and hence, a somewhat dysfunctional approach, *the craft* and *the applied science models* are not considered sufficiently adequate to meet the requirements of SLTE, particularly in terms of teachers' psychological and ecological contexts and the subsequent necessity of the theory-practice interface. Instead, the holistic concept of education appears to support the *reflective model* with its complementary link between received and experiential knowledge. With regard to teacher development as an on-going process existing beyond the temporal bounds of formal courses, the *mediational* orientation of teachers to evaluate principles and apply them appropriately to specific contexts is viewed as highly desirable. Finally, a validity in principles is sought and an attempt is made to formulate the basic assumptions deemed necessary to underlie a general framework of second language teacher education. This is used in the next chapter as a term of reference for investigating the current English language teacher education programme offered in Bangladesh.

## CHAPTER 4

### Education provisions for secondary school English teachers in Bangladesh

#### 4. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the current English programme which comprises a part of the B.Ed. course at the Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) in Bangladesh. This programme caters for the education, or as more commonly known in my part of the world, the *training*<sup>26</sup> of secondary school teachers, and therefore discussion of the preparation of English language (EL) teachers at the primary level (Classes 1 to 5) or the higher secondary level (Classes 11 and 12) is outside my brief. However, to set the qualifications and standards of secondary school EL teachers in perspective, a word is warranted about teachers' qualifications at these other two levels.

Primary school teachers need a secondary school certificate (SSC) and a year's training at the Primary Teaching Institutes, although there is no special provision for the teaching of English. Teachers at this level usually teach a variety of subjects. Higher secondary classes are taught beyond the secondary level (in higher secondary schools or colleges), for which teachers are required to have an MA in English (mainly in literature) but no formal teacher training. Indeed essential notions of ELT or TEFL are not recognised at this level. This is reminiscent of the time in Europe, at the turn of the century, when subject matter qualifications were enough to procure a teaching job (see section 2.1.2). At this stage, teachers only teach their designated subject. The prerequisites for secondary school EL teachers are discussed in the next section.

This chapter is presented in 3 parts, the first providing a survey of EL teacher training provisions (in-service and pre-service) available throughout the country. Next, I investigate the background to the recently revised EL teacher training course in order to understand the environment within which the phenomenon of secondary school ELT and the activities of the EL teacher is situated. This in turn serves to highlight the

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<sup>26</sup> I shall use the terms *teacher training*, *teacher trainer* and *trainee-teacher* henceforth without any value judgement attached to the word *training*.



innovative nature of the revised curriculum. Finally, I analyse this SLTE programme and attempt to evaluate it in terms of theoretical as well as contextual validity.

#### **4.1 Teacher training for secondary schools**

The total number of teachers in the secondary school system is 138,039 of whom 93.8% are in non-government schools (BANBEIS 1998). The prerequisite for secondary school teachers is a BA (Pass)<sup>27</sup> degree and preferably a post-graduate B.Ed. degree from a TTC. A decade ago, Rahman (1989) argued that one of the major handicaps in education was the shortage of trained teachers at the secondary level. The situation today appears much the same, if not worse, particularly in terms of the expansion of schooling in demographic terms. This is evident from the fact that out of approximately 40,000 teachers who teach English, only a small minority have post-graduate teaching qualifications and an even smaller minority have been trained in English teaching (Sultana and Hoque 1995, Hoque 1996). This is a serious constraint in terms of providing quality education.

Hoque (1996) estimates that conventional training institutes have the capacity to train about 300 EL teachers every year. At this rate, it would take more than 70 years to train the untrained teachers already in service, not to speak of new recruits to the profession annually. In such a scenario, the provision for on-going in-service training support towards teacher development is an imperative. It is important to point out here that although I refer to the ‘presence’ as opposed to an ‘absence’ of training, the issue of the *nature* and *quality* of the training provided is obviously of great importance.

##### **4.1.1 Teacher training in the TTCs**

There are 10 state-run teacher training colleges all affiliated to the National University including a private TTC. The TTCs are responsible for both pre-service and in-service training which is actually offered as a single package. Thus both types of trainees have

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<sup>27</sup> The BA (Pass) course has a duration of 2 years and is offered at colleges only, as compared to the BA (Honours) course which is of 3 years duration (4 years since 1996-97) and is offered by universities and university colleges. The B.Ed. is a one-year course for graduates offered only at the TTCs.

to follow the same course and satisfy the same requirements. The majority of participants are in-service teachers on a year's secondment from their schools. Cullen (1991a) puts the figure at 80%, my sample study had 76.3% on secondment. This particular fact (that most participants on the course are actually practising teachers or have had some teaching experience) is significant to my thesis.

The B.Ed. course, offered to graduates, spans one academic year and consists of 5 core papers on educational issues and 2 elective papers on areas of specialisation. The core papers deal with the principles and history of education, educational psychology, education and national development, evaluation, guidance, counselling. The 2 specialisations are chosen from 6 on offer — English, Bengali, Mathematics, Science, Social Science and Geography. Bengali is the medium of instruction for all the courses except in the English programme (in practice though, some of the lecturing and discussions are done in the L1, interview data 1996).

Most trainees taking the English course have not studied English since higher secondary school, and therefore, do not feel confident in using the language. This realisation is acute in terms of performance in examinations, as poor language skills adversely affect results (Sultana and Hoque 1995). It is no surprise that English is not terribly popular as a subject. Cullen (1991a) quotes figures for trainee-teachers offering English as an elective subject for the 10 TTCs in 1990 as being 7.5% of the total number of trainees. Several years on, the figures have not improved. Table 4.1 shows English course enrolments for the Dhaka TTC. As the Dhaka TTC generally enjoys high status, it may be conjectured that English enrolment in the other TTCs might be even lower. It is important to point out that teachers who normally teach English in their jobs do not necessarily take the English specialisation option in their B.Ed. course though it is obligatory for government school teachers who are sponsored by the directorate. Additionally it is interesting to note that those who take the English elective may choose not to offer the English 'practicum' during final assessment as B.Ed. regulations allow trainees to be tested (on the practice teaching) on *any one* of their two specialisations. Although the college was unable to provide exact figures, according to Dhaka TTC trainers, only about one-third of trainees with the English option actually do English practice teaching during final assessment.

Year	Total trainees on enrolment	Trainees with English (elective)	Percentage of total
1996-1997	656	40	6.09%
1997-1998	694	42	6.05%
1998-1999	603	68	11.27%

**Table 4.1: Number of trainees with English specialisation in Dhaka TTC**

[Source: Dhaka Teacher Training College]

The programme is divided into 3 terms and the course is taught for a period of 45 minutes, 4 days a week during the first two terms. Strict schedules are difficult to maintain due to a variety of reasons ranging from political work-strikes to religious festivals to disruptions caused by natural disasters (the floods of August-September 1998 forced all educational institutions to be closed down for nearly two months). Examination dates, too, get shifted for various reasons, according to an EL teacher trainer (interview data 1996). Teaching practice is undertaken in the third term, when trainees are appointed to secondary schools under the supervision of a lecturer for 6-7 weeks (see section 4.3.1.4 for further discussion on practice teaching). After that there are ‘revision’ classes (but usually trainers are still covering new ground – interview data 1996) followed by the final examinations. The term tests too take up some of the time allotted for teaching. Therefore, although in theory, the English course content is intended to be around 80 sessions, in practice, it rarely exceeds 50-55 (interview data 1996). Thus in view of the trainees’ own limited English, together with their unfamiliarity with teaching methodology, a course of such a short duration seems inadequate (Cullen 1991a, Hoque 1996).

The style of training among the lecturers is usually instructor-centred (but see interview data regarding the new syllabus, section 6.2.3). This is in keeping with the general and highly traditional educational ethos (see section 1.3.2) which caters to set norms and traditional expectations. Although in the new syllabus, there are ample possibilities of task-based activities, reflection and analysis, the lecture mode still appears to be frequently used (interview data 1996). Hoque (1996) argues that the TTC programme is in effect inadequate since EL training constitutes a very small component of the entire

course. In addition, he points to a shortage of qualified subject specialist teacher trainers, a lack of adequate teaching practice facilities as well as a lack of resources.

#### **4.1.2 Teacher training outside the TTCs**

With an annual output of 3,500 teachers for all subjects and a total of over 70,000 existing untrained teachers, it is clearly an impossible task for the TTCs to handle the phenomenon of teacher training unassisted. I now look at teacher training opportunities available outside the TTCs, with specific reference to EL teacher training.

The Institute of Education and Research (IER) runs a one-year post-graduate diploma programme with an English component which sadly needs to be revised in line with contemporary approaches to language teacher education. The TTCs and IER also offer M.Ed. courses, but an English option is not included at this level. The English Department of the Dhaka University offers an MA in English Language and Linguistics. This course is, however, inclined towards theoretical linguistics rather than language teaching. Cullen (1991a) suggests that this sort of course background for future TTC lecturers might prove useful.

The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) organises its own orientation course for teachers when new curricula and textbooks are introduced in schools. With the recent reformulation of the secondary curriculum for English and the revision of the EL textbooks, the NCTB (with external specialists) ran an initial orientation course for those EL teachers involved in the piloting of the revised textbook at Class 6 (the OTEFL project). This was followed by a series of short orientation courses and workshops on the communicative approach and the use of the revised materials for secondary school EL teachers throughout the country. Mosback (1990, 1994) argues that the advantages of in-service training in language improvement, in ELT procedures or in the orientation of principles underlying textbooks cannot be underestimated, particularly when preceding a curriculum revision, as illustrated in the work done in Sri Lanka (see, however, my data findings on EL teachers on the OTEFL project in chapter 6, section 6.1.5).

The Institute of Modern Languages at the University of Dhaka has run two intensive 3-month certificate programmes in TEFL and currently offers occasional 3-week ELT courses. Hoque et al (1994) report on an intensive in-service course for EL lecturers at the Technical Teacher Training College. The British Council's 3 English resource centres provided short ELT training programmes for school teachers over a number of years before being closed down in 1993 for 'lack of funds'. At present a massive 'English Language Teaching Improvement Project' (ELTIP) for secondary schools, partly funded by the DFID and under the auspices of the British Council and the NCTB, has just started. Operating around a network of 4 regional resource centres supporting 28 proposed satellite resource centres, it aims to improve the teaching of communicative English in secondary schools through materials development, testing reforms, and EL teacher development. Besides, the Bangladesh English language teachers' association (BELTA), established in 1985, brings out a teaching journal intermittently, and has held a number of regional workshops for EL teachers. Overcoming a period of inactivity, BELTA is currently set to continue its professional support for the EL teaching community in schools.

In addition, the Secondary Science Education (SCED) project offers short 2-3 week intensive courses for school teachers throughout the year. Although originally earmarked for science, the SCED project has been extended to other subjects including English. Nevertheless, with an absence of English specialists and trainers in its core staff, the courses offered are few and far between and the focus is simply on teaching formal structures of grammar. Such courses can hardly be beneficial to EL teacher development. Nevertheless, the SCED project, with its impressive premises and facilities, and given appropriate input, does have potential to support teacher training.

Finally, special mention must be made of the Bangladesh Open University (BOU). In 1996, it piloted the country's first ever formal ELT programme, a 2-year Bachelor of English Language Teaching (B.ELT) for practising school teachers. The BOU (evolved from the former Bangladesh Institute of Distance Education) uses the distance learning concept as an alternative to conventional education. Besides enjoying the merits generally accrued to distance education (see Keegan 1986), it has a potential for providing training to large numbers of EL teachers, particularly in remote parts of the country who cannot, for various reasons, join conventional teacher training courses.

Hoque (1996) argues that the BOU programme has more potential than the TTC EL course in terms of duration, course content and structural support. The course focuses on 3 major areas: teachers' language improvement, communicative language teaching methodology and teaching practice using trainees' own classes over an extended period of time. Disseminating training through printed self-study materials, audio-video packs and radio-TV broadcasts, it has summer and winter schools as well as tutorial services twice a month in its proposed country-wide network of tutorial centres and regional and local resource centres. Monitoring of trainee progress is carried out by the BOU network of student support services. Three key personnel have been targeted for this purpose – head teachers, part-time tutors and permanent BOU staff. At the moment, only part-time BOU tutors, mostly retired English specialists, working as consultants, have this expertise. Therefore, there is a crucial need for more specialists to be nurtured into the BOU cadre and an orientation need for head teachers. Whether head teachers are willing to take on this extra load is another matter. Attention, however, may be drawn to Bacchus (1998) who emphasises the need to include head teachers in any kind of teacher development.

The picture that emerges in the non-TTC field then is that there are growing opportunities for EL teacher training in the country. At least, it may be argued that the BOU is poised to play a significant role in ELT development as distance education is increasingly being perceived as complementing conventional teacher education (Perraton 1984, 1993), and particularly in developing countries (see, for example, the case of Zimbabwe in Chivore 1993). In addition, the SCED project has possibilities for in-service training support while the ELTIP project, with its multi-perspective approach, is poised for some hopeful work. The IER too could make a significant contribution by overhauling its entire diploma course, along with the English component. The other efforts mentioned above may be seen in terms of on-going professional support, supplementing a longer period of conventional teacher training. An important caveat, of course, is that there needs to be quality assurance for the programmes offered vis-à-vis trainers, syllabuses, course materials, methodology, resources, and where necessary, adequate assessment procedures.

## 4.2 The need for re-thinking English language teacher education

A growing world-wide interest in greater educational *productivity* has shifted the focus away from curriculum development per se towards the more effective delivery of existing curricula, through both quantitative and qualitative improvements. These improvements involve the expertise of well-trained teachers to deliver the curriculum. In terms of EL teaching in Bangladesh, Shrubsall states:

Although the curriculum stands as a vital initiating document, competent English teachers remain the most important factor in TEFL and their methodology holds the key to successful language teaching/learning rather than any organizational aspects.  
(Shrubsall 1990: 38)

At the outset, however, it is necessary to review briefly some broad aspects of the educational scene in general, and the ELT scene in particular, within which the re-thinking of the education of EL teachers in Bangladesh may be perceived. Rea-Dickens and Germaine (1992) maintain that explaining and confirming existing procedures help to clarify the rationale for, as well as the process of implementing change. Some of the major issues in the educational scenario have already been discussed in chapter 1 (sections 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4, 1.3.2). These refer to a growing awareness of declining standards of English particularly within schools, the repeated but apparently unsuccessful attempts at ELT reform and the nature of the general learning ethos.

In the next 3 sections, I provide additional information on ELT in secondary schools in order to understand the issue of teacher training within this particular setting. These pertain to features regarding the secondary school EL teacher, the classroom environment, and the school-final examination. Although such information would normally include teaching methodology, I have delayed commenting on it until the analysis of my data from classroom observations in chapter 6. Nevertheless the information provided so far will explain how different factors converge to form a complex ELT context within which I attempt to locate EL teacher behaviour and beliefs, and to link them to issues of EL teacher education. I should point out that data presented here (as in chapter 1) are mostly derived from secondary sources although descriptions of class settings (section 4.2.2) include findings from my observation data.

#### 4.2.1 The secondary school teacher of English

The 1990 Baseline Survey reported that 28.5% of the 105 EL teachers surveyed in different regions had a B.Ed. degree with an English specialisation. Cullen (1991a), however, cautioned that the survey sample might have been misleading and in reality, the figure would be lower. Whatever the figures, the fact remains that a vast majority teaching English in secondary schools are expected to do so with no training and with a very limited command of the language (Sultana and Hoque 1995, Hoque 1996).

The Task Force Report (1976) had stated that only 15% of EL teachers were capable of teaching up to Class 10 and the 1990 survey results were even more discouraging (see section 1.2.3). Additionally there is widespread practice of a single teacher teaching two or three different subjects without any specific qualification (Cullen 1991a, Sultana and Hoque 1995, my interview data 1994, 1996). Furthermore, the rampant practice of private tuition among teachers of all subjects leads to senior EL teachers (even though untrained) monopolising the teaching of higher classes, thus insuring for themselves, a rich crop of private tutees (Sultana and Hoque 1995). Anecdotal evidence reveals astronomical earnings made by EL teachers through private tuition.

Based on the information presented so far, I offer a profile of the secondary school teacher of English in Table 4.2. This profile does not include EL teachers' classroom practices or an indication of their attitudes or beliefs as these are dealt with separately in terms of my empirical study in chapter 6.

Qualifications	Some Relevant Facts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• BA (Pass) degree obligatory</li><li>• B.Ed. with English mandatory but relaxed due to acute shortage of English teachers.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A few have Masters degrees</li><li>• Senior teachers teach English in higher classes (9-10).</li><li>• Junior teachers teach lower classes (6-8). Teach other subjects besides English.</li><li>• Overall poor command of English language.</li><li>• Engage in extensive private tuition.</li><li>• Generally enjoy a degree of esteem in school and in public life due to a sense of deference in society towards English.</li><li>• Some teachers deputed from school for teacher training course at TTC (English, however, remains an option unless teachers are employed by state schools)</li></ul>

**Table 4.2: A profile of the secondary school teacher of English**



#### **4.2.2 The classroom environment**

Cullen (1991a) maintains that some government and private urban schools are relatively well equipped, with spacious classrooms, overhead fans, individual desks for students, decent blackboards and sufficient room for the teacher to move around. However, in my observation of 43 secondary classes, all in urban schools, I found conditions much more depressing. Students sat on benches or desks in a room that was invariably rectangular in shape with the seating arranged lengthwise which meant that the teacher at the front of the room was far removed from the students at the back. Except for the blackboard placed in front within easy reach of the teacher, the walls were bare, barring an occasional map. Quite a few of the students at the rear half of the class could hardly hear the teacher or see the writing on the board. There was often a lot of noise that filtered in, making the teacher inaudible to those at the back (see too Cullen 1991a, Khan 1995). In addition, I found the classroom furniture often in a decrepit state.

In rural schools and in many private urban schools, Huq (1988), Hoque (1989), and Khan (1995) claim class sizes are large with students often crammed into spaces not meant to hold that many. Even in the more advantaged city schools, I found 3 students sharing a desk meant for 2. BANBEIS (1996) reports the average class size as 54. According to Cullen, an average English class has 50 students. My study showed an average of 42 but this was due to the fact that one class had only 14 students due to very bad weather – the usual class size I observed ranged from 60 to 65. Additionally, in most rural and in some urban schools situated in a poor catchment area, it is common to find a much larger number registered. Here students attend irregularly, a drawback in terms of schooling. And yet, it may perhaps be seen as a survival strategy that has developed where schools struggle to cope with resource constraints. In this case, limited classroom space in terms of a disproportionately large student population has evolved a kind of ‘musical chair arrangement’ assuring everyone a chance of being in school, for some of the time at least, if not all.

Like Cullen, I too found that the larger classes were in the big and relatively prestigious urban government and private schools. Indeed I found 76 students in one classroom with the teacher using a public address system and doing little more than lecturing.

Here the middle class background of the students coupled with a strict school ethos enforced better attendance. With regard to class size, whereas educational standards require a lower ratio of teachers to students, the government has stated that to cope with the rising pressures of enrolment in secondary schools, the target of student-teacher ratio of 50:1 has been relaxed to 60:1 (BBS 1992). This is an example of the expedient measures identified by Vashisth (1992) (see section 1.3.1) that governments in developing countries are adopting, which in turn, are actually contributing to the decline in the quality of education.

#### **4.2.3 The role of the secondary school-final examinations**

At the end of Class 10, students take the school-final Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination arranged by an independent examining board, and 2 years later, take the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination. The English examination consists of 2 papers, each of a hundred marks (pass mark 36%). Paper 1 covers the *English for Today* textbook and the reader and Paper 2 covers grammar items, a letter, an essay, translation and reading comprehension.

Items and topics are repeated (even texts for translation) providing immense scope for memorisation. Thus test reliability, validity and objectivity are inadequate (Huq 1988, Rahman 1989, Sultana and Hoque, 1995). There is lack of standardisation in marking as most examiners are the same EL secondary school teachers with poor language skills (see section 1.2.3), themselves dependent on notebooks. There is extensive anecdotal evidence of extremely able students being awarded low marks, perhaps because examiners cannot appreciate the quality of examinee output. On the other hand, memorised, regurgitated and stereotypical answers score high, thus invalidating the assessment procedure. The requirements of the examination has a strong negative backwash effect on teaching and learning strategies (Alderson and Wall 1993 and Prodomou 1995) and completes the cycle of the monolithic view of knowledge.

A direct result is the powerful influence that guides and notebooks exert. They form a lifeline throughout the entire education system and are hugely popular (Rahman 1994, Sultana and Hoque 1995). EL guide books in particular are used not only by students but by teachers too. As there is a general dread of English as a difficult subject and the

examination is considered the end-all, these notebooks provide, in bilingual text, a wide variety of model answers to both grammar and content-based tasks. By a complex system of permutation and combination, predictions of all possible items for forthcoming examinations are offered making some of these guides formidable in size. The rationale operating in this thriving business is the culture of reliance on content-based, fragmented knowledge which can then be memorised and regurgitated as necessary. Sultana and Hoque (1995) point to a spurious collaboration at the grassroots level between the private school teachers' association and commercial publishers in producing these books. (This was corroborated through my interviews with teachers). Although tremendously popular in schools and homes, academics and educationists see them as "one of the most harmful hindrances to the learning of English" (Sultana and Hoque 1995: 2). An excerpt from a leading newspaper reflects this general concern:

The amazing thing is questions set within the syllabus are not considered fair by the examinees if they are not "common" to the mass-produced notebooks they had used. There have allegedly been instances where teachers were forced to alter specific questions during actual exams because they were not on the "suggestion list" or "question-answer" handbooks. .... Most schools and colleges and even universities in the country are happy to employ mindless teaching methods that are good only for producing herds of certificate-earning morons.  
(Editor, *The Bangladesh Observer*, 18 November, 1996.)

The quotation above is one of many that reflect the unsatisfactory nature of these examinations (Rahman 1986, 1991, 1997, Cullen 1991a, Shrubsall 1992, 1993, Allen 1994, Sultana and Hoque 1995). However, no significant steps have been taken so far except for an attempt to introduce a multiple-choice format in 1990 covering 50% of the first paper. When initially proposed, there was great resistance to the idea of students tackling anything that had not been learnt previously i.e. memorised (in line with the cultural norms of learning). The NCTB, bowing to pressures, had to provide a 'bank' of 500 questions from which the test items appeared verbatim. The overall result was memorisation on a grand scale. The knock-on effect on the SSC English pass percentage in the Dhaka Board is evident in Table 4.3. Compared to results in 1990 when only 28.65% passed the English tests, memorisation of pre-specified multiple-choice items skewed results upwards abnormally without any corresponding gain in language ability.

Year	Pass % in English Examination	Status of Objective Questions
1994	91.86	NCTB supplied 500 test items
1995	90.14	NCTB supplied 500 test items
1996	52.35	NCTB stopped supplying test items but guidebooks supplied 2000 items
1997	49.23	NCTB did not supply test items but guidebooks continued to do so.

**Table 4.3: Pass percentage of English paper in SSC examinations, Dhaka Board, 1994 - 97**

[Source: Controller of Examinations, Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, Dhaka, Letter no. Computer-18/Gen Training/95/223 dated 14.8.97]

This endeavour has been unsuccessful on two accounts. First, the objective questions do not test language skills and are still grammar and content-based, and therefore, in terms of validity as advocated by Stevenson (1983), the test items rate poorly. Secondly, it is the familiar story of an imposed educational change thwarted by an unaccepting culture which then set its own agenda to solve the problem. Indeed it has only served to emphasise an over-learning of odd structures that pass as English (see Prodomou 1995 for overt and covert negative backwash effects on learning for tests).

The NCTB is currently cutting down on this multiple-choice component. As notebooks have always been one step ahead of the examinations (Rahman 1994), and since the NCTB announced in 1995 that it would no longer be providing any more question banks, the notebooks have come up with a set of 2000 possible multiple-choice items. Approaching this endeavour through a feasibility study and a piloting phase might have saved the NCTB and the government a great deal of embarrassment. This is a clear example of what Allen (1994) has described as a misapplication of human resources, time and money in the field of ELT in Bangladesh.

#### **4.2.4 Previous training provisions for secondary school English teachers**

An examination of the previous syllabus of the Dhaka TTC shows a useful set of objectives (see Appendix 4B). However, on close inspection of the units in the content

area, a number of anomalies can be seen. Firstly, there is a mismatch between some of the objectives and the course content. For example, one of the objectives, ‘helping trainees to improve general English proficiency’, is clearly important given the overall poor command of the language. However, the sections provided in the content area (Unit 3) shows this unit to be linguistics-based (e.g. the teaching of phonetics to improve pronunciation). In addition, there is a focus on language structures (phrase, voice, verbs and participles) suggesting a preoccupation with surface structure and grammatical form rather than meaning and use of language. This language bias is also seen in the Dhaka TTC 1990 examination papers which have the following questions:

Discuss the difference between a gerund and a participle citing at least three examples for each.

Explain the following symbols:

a) NP1+Vt+NP2+NP3;      b) Wh+be+NP+Participle+adverbial

Another example is the rather ‘grandiose’ objective, “to enable them [trainees] to study the actual English teaching situation and suggest remedial measures”. This objective appears to conform to the ‘action research’ principle which is no doubt valuable. However, the underlying philosophy of learning and teaching of the course together with the contents and the methodology all point towards a passive, reactive form of top-down knowledge transfer. In this situation, one cannot see the possibility of trainees taking up any enquiry-oriented exercise.

Secondly, the course content lacks detail and is far too general to be of help either to the trainer or to the trainee or for the purposes of assessment. For example, in the unit on ‘Developing language skills’, the four skills are simply listed and no reference is made to issues or sub-skills involved. Under ‘reading skill’, issues of silent reading and reading aloud are not mentioned nor are any specific procedures mentioned to develop these sub-skills. Occasional references to techniques such as ‘oral exercises’ and ‘pair and group work’ are vague and not substantiated in any form.

Thirdly, the syllabus does not appear to have kept abreast of any developments in ELT. Under the unit on methods of teaching, ‘the audio-lingual method’ is presented alongside ‘the communicative method’ as examples of innovative approaches to teaching. Surprisingly enough, ‘the eclectic approach’ is also listed here (see my critique of the eclectic approach in section 3.1.1.3 where I argue that there is a risk

of teachers randomly using ‘eclecticism’ without adequate theoretical basis). Also, the most recent publication in the list of recommended books is from 1973. In fact most of the titles are from the 60s and reflect the hey-day of the structural approach.

Thus the principle underlying the syllabus appears to be the transmission of knowledge about the English language and about language teaching rather than on educating teachers to become able practitioners. The course leans heavily towards a theoretical knowledge about language. Even in terms of methodology, the trainees are presented with the salient features of the different methods of teaching and the advantages and the disadvantages of each, without them ever knowing in real life how each method is employed. There is no indication in the syllabus or in the contents that, as a result of this teaching, trainees will be able to select and apply appropriate teaching techniques in their own classrooms. Yet, under teaching techniques, there is a euphemistic call for “active learning and on the involvement of trainees in developing their own personal styles” (an example of misguided borrowing of terms in curriculum design pointed out by LoCastro 1996). Indeed, at the level of techniques (e.g. the presentation of vocabulary, the development of reading skills), the syllabus appears to be silent. This is reflected in the examinations. For example, the Dhaka TTC 1990 paper has this item which is characteristic of all the methods-based questions on the syllabus:

‘Discuss the main features of the structural approach to language teaching. Comment on its merits and demerits’.

It may be pointed out that even one of the most ardent advocates of the educational orientation to teacher education (see section 3.3) like Widdowson (1990, 1997) admits the necessity of upholding a skills-based training orientation particularly at the beginning stage. This brings me to the argument that I have intermittently made in chapters 2 and 3: that there may be special circumstances in the developing world, particularly with regard to non-native speaker EL teachers, where a training orientation might be more appropriate, at least for many of the content areas. This argument is taken up again in the context of the revised syllabus.

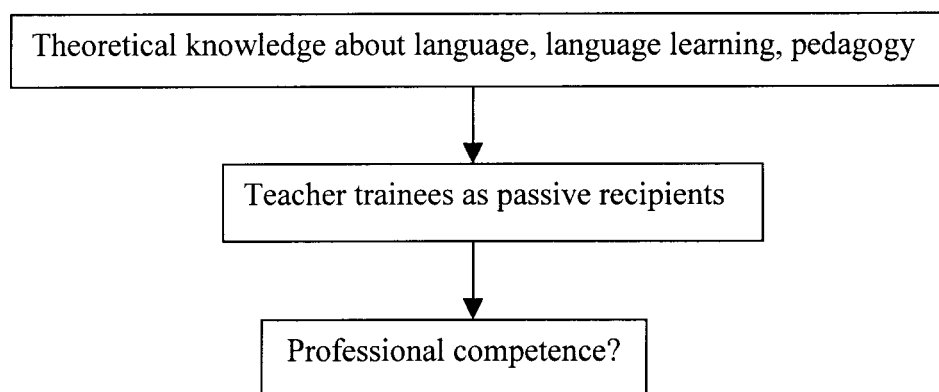
In terms of an SLTE model as discussed in section 3.4, the principle obviously is theory informing practice in a purely rationalist tradition. This is evidently the *strong* version of ‘the applied linguistics to language pedagogy’ tradition that Markee (1990) has

criticised (see section 3.1.1.2). This theoretical knowledge can be traced to the three levels advocated by Richards and Rodgers (1986): a theory of language (bits of language constitute the whole), a theory of language learning (a focus on rules, forms, drills and repetition) and a theory of pedagogy ('empty pint-pots' to be filled with knowledge by the 'full' pint pot embodied by the all-knowing teacher – Maley 1983). The top-down transmission ethos of this programme completely separates the experts or theorists from the practitioners or the 'doers' and no links, either overt or covert, is made to classroom pedagogy in any way. In this respect, the model reveals what Wallace (1991) calls an *extreme* applied science approach (see section 3.4.2).

It may be pointed out here that whereas the applied science model of professional education works on the principle of the *input-process-output* model (see figure 3.4) with knowledge refined and updated along the way (see figure 3.3), the programme here displays no scope for refinement and appears to be working on a simple *input-output* principle with the *processing* phase completely ignored. Within this model, the trainee teacher is expected, by some miracle, to 'process' the knowledge imparted in the course and apply it to the classroom. In reality, this theoretical knowledge remains completely abstract and elitist in tone as argued by Edge (1989), and teachers on entering their classrooms comfortably slip into the 'folkways of teaching' Buchman (1987) refers to (see section 2.1.1). This sort of theoretical educational experience is probably what Clarke (1992, 1994) means when he claims theory is entirely dysfunctional for teachers (see section 3.1.2).

Moreover, in Stern's (1983b) applied science model of SLTE (see figure 3.5), the dominant 'language teaching theory' about the nature of language and a particular concept of language learning includes recognition of 'educational' and 'social' contexts as well as of 'teacher characteristics'. Together they provide the overall setting for the teacher training programme. In contrast, the EL programme under scrutiny ignores all contextual features and presents the course as an embodiment of a universally valid systematic body of knowledge to be handed down to passive 'pint pots'. Apart from the generally accepted idea that a didactic, transmissive view of knowledge is currently in disfavour, and cognitive and contextual features are recognised as critical determinants in any learning situation, it may be reiterated that this blind faith in the 'body of knowledge' within the programme, is itself unfounded. As argued earlier, linguistics

and its feeder disciplines have NOT been able to provide a comprehensive knowledge base for language teaching pedagogy (see section 2.1.2) and even less towards the formulation of a coherent theory of SLTE (chapters 2 and 3, *passim*). Moreover, as Freeman (1994) maintains, disciplinary knowledge can not be assumed to equate with teaching knowledge. In the light of this discussion, the professional model that underpins this particular EL teacher training programme is presented below:



**Figure 4.1: An ‘extreme’ applied science model of SLTE as represented by the previous TTC course**

In the light of the principles for SLTE I have drawn up in section 3.4.5, it is seen that this model disregards most of the fundamental tenets I have argued to be essential for a language teacher education programme. For example, it views teacher education as a simple linear process (instead of a complex non-linear process of development). It ignores trainee-teachers pre-training mental constructs and beliefs as well as their experiential knowledge. In addition, it makes no attempts to clarify such significant factors as educational ideology and teaching contexts, teachers’ and learners’ roles, and the needs, goals and objectives of the course as well as the one they are being prepared for. Above all, there is no awareness-raising among trainees (one of the central purposes of teacher education, according to Edge 1994), and no link is created between received knowledge and trainees’ understanding and experience. On all these counts, the old training curriculum may be seen as an inadequate model of SLTE. In these circumstances one can hardly overstate the need for a revision of the programme.



### 4.3 The revised TTC English programme

In the light of the difficulties facing EL teaching and learning in Bangladesh, voices of concern have been raised particularly with regard to educational *productivity*. Moreover, it may be reiterated that in concert with the rise of the communicative approach, much reform work throughout the developing world has been concerned with bringing about curricular changes in syllabus design, classroom methodology, course books, testing and assessment, and particularly in training and developing teachers.

Perhaps the single factor that is most responsible for the falling standards of English in Bangladesh is the serious lack of trained teachers. Good books may be written, but if the teacher does not know how to use them, effective language learning will never take place. Therefore, teacher training is the priority issue in the whole of our ELT programme, and needs to be addressed immediately and frontally.  
(Sultana and Hoque 1995: 3)

The need for an effective provision to address this issue of initiating and developing teachers through an appropriate process of education began with steps being taken in 1990 with an EL textbook revision project for secondary schools being co-ordinated with a revision of the B.Ed. English curriculum. In this connection it may be pointed out that in the current climate of recognising and working with interrelated areas when introducing any change (Rogers 1983), the interdependence of textbook revision and teacher development is only too obvious. Mosback (1990, 1994) and Nunan and Harrison (1994) have extolled the advantages of curriculum renewal co-ordinated with the professional development of teachers. Indeed Mosback argues that initiation of teachers into the principles of a curriculum reform should actually precede the reform itself. The Joint GOB/ODA project review report (1994) on the orientation of secondary school teachers for ELT in Bangladesh recommends this initiation to start at least a year before the materials are actually used.

Clearly many areas needed to be improved, particularly the syllabus, the course materials, the methodology and the provision of qualified English teacher trainers on the staff. A working party consisting of lecturers from the TTCs and two external specialists reviewed the English syllabus, drew up a draft in the form of a revised syllabus and produced accompanying materials to support it. The syllabus was piloted

at the Dhaka TTC during the 1991-92 academic year, and then introduced into the other TTCs the following year. In 1993, a follow-up workshop elicited feedback from trainers who offered recommendations for further revision of the syllabus. In this connection it may be pointed out that no feedback was sought from the trainees who had been the guinea pigs in the trialling period. Many of the recommended changes were incorporated and all the materials were brought together in one book. This syllabus was later ratified by the Faculty of Education, Dhaka University (see Appendix 4C for sample copy of the revised syllabus).

#### **4.3.1 The EL training curriculum: principles and approach**

According to Pennington (1990), every teacher education programme embodies a philosophy of teaching that connects performance goals to training methods and course content. Ideally, it requires an explicit rationale that relates course content to specific outcomes. This is usually embodied in a curriculum document. In this case the curriculum document is embodied in the *B. Ed English Elective Course 1993-1994* manual for the TTCs. There are 2 editions – a trainer’s manual and a trainee’s book, the former containing, in addition to all that is in the trainee’s book, advice on using the materials. This manual constitutes the syllabus together with the course content and methodology all within one document. It may be mentioned here that the course units draw heavily on the ideas and approach of Doff’s (1988a, 1988b) *Teach English. A Training Course for Teachers* which also has a teacher’s workbook and a trainer’s handbook.

To understand the nature of the B.Ed. syllabus, I first refer to Nunan’s (1988) distinction between a *broad* and a *narrow* approach to syllabus design. The narrow approach, advocated by Allen (1984), considers syllabus as concerned only with the selection and grading of content. The broader view upheld by Breen (1984) and Candlin (1984) sees methodology being included as well, on the grounds that distinction between content and task is difficult to maintain. The revised syllabus conforms to this broader view as it contains not only the content areas but tasks and activities as well as instructions on methodology.

Nunan further differentiates between *process* and *product-oriented* syllabuses. In product-oriented syllabuses, content is stated in terms of the outcomes of instructions while in a process-oriented approach, methodology is concerned with the process through which outcomes are to be brought about. Nevertheless, although there is a major conceptual difference between a product and a process-oriented syllabus, in practice, a given syllabus may be located along a process-product continuum. In order to deconstruct the assumptions and principles underlying this programme and to understand the approach of the curriculum developers, I now investigate the syllabus along 4 parameters viz. *objectives*, *content area* (including training materials), *proposed methodology* and *practice teaching*.

#### **4.3.1.1 Objectives**

In Tyler's (1949) rational curriculum process, *objectives* are specified before content and activities since their principal role is to act as a guide to the selection of other elements in the curriculum. However, as Nunan (1988) claims, in more interactive and process-based approaches to curriculum and syllabus design, objectives can be helpful in a number of ways. They can be useful not only in guiding and selecting content or tasks, but also in providing a sharper focus for teachers, and giving learners a clear idea of what they can expect from a programme, as well as helping in developing valid means of assessment and evaluation. Objectives thus may be specified in terms of activities, topics or course content, generalised patterns of attainable behaviour, as learning outcomes or as performance objectives. In line with recent perspectives, syllabus objectives too have come to be seen as process or product-oriented. The objectives of the revised TTC syllabus which are presented right at the outset are stated in the following manner:

- i) To improve the general English proficiency of the trainees.
- ii) To increase the trainee's awareness of the need for and use of English in Bangladesh, and the place of English in the secondary school curriculum.
- iii) To equip the trainees with the necessary skills for teaching English as a foreign language in Bangladesh, by:
  - a) developing their understanding of the key principles of English language learning and teaching with specific reference to English as a foreign language;

- b) by helping the trainees make effective classroom use of the secondary-school textbooks and any supporting materials;
- c) by enabling the trainees to plan appropriate terminal/annual schemes of work and prepare effective lesson plans;
- d) by developing their ability to set appropriate tests in English and to evaluate the day-to-day progress of their students.
- iv) To provide a basis for the continued professional growth of the trainees once the course is over, by developing their self-awareness as teachers of English and by stimulating their interest in the field of language teaching.  
(*Trainer's Manual* 1993-1994: 2)

The objectives thus appear in the form of generalised patterns of attainable behaviour that the curriculum developers prefer to call 'aims'. Compared to the old set of objectives, they are more specific, realistic and 'less grandiose'. For example, the first objective simply states "to improve the general English proficiency of the trainees". No performance objectives are announced as in the old syllabus where the same objective continues to say "so that they can effectively teach the subject at this level". Whether *effective teaching* is dependent on *language proficiency* is dubious, as argued in section 2.2.2. Also whether trainees or anyone for that matter can alone teach *effectively* is a debated issue and depends on a complexity of factors. Thus in expressing objectives, words have been chosen carefully to avoid ambiguity and to remain within the bounds of realistically attainable goals in terms of a specific context.

In the third objective, the new syllabus speaks of "equipping" the trainees with the "necessary skills" for "teaching English as a foreign language" whereas the old one had professed to help trainees "to acquire skills in modern methods and techniques of teaching English" (sic). More importantly, it offers tangible ways of approaching this objective (see item iii), and sub-items a) to d) above). The most significant addition to the list of objectives is the last one pertaining to the "continued professional growth of the trainees once the course was over". In terms of the principles of SLTE I have drawn up in section 3.4.5, this phenomenon of on-going development beyond the bounds of the temporal course through self-awareness and self-improvement strategies, what Wallace (1993) has called "dynamic professionalism", is of the utmost importance. Whether the course is able to imbibe the necessary elements in teachers towards this goal is another matter. Thus it may be said that the objectives appear to conform to the currently favoured process-oriented approach.

#### **4.3.1.2 Course content**

Interestingly, there is no mention of academic disciplines like linguistics or phonetics. This points to an underlying assumption that the curriculum developers do not see theoretical knowledge as existing in a dominating role. Instead concepts and ideas from the academic disciplines are kept simple and are used with teaching/learning-related issues so that relationships between ‘received knowledge’ and teaching contexts are never lost sight of. The perspective therefore is of theory and practice in an interrelated form, currently very much in vogue, for reasons argued in section 3.1.

The course content is divided into 11 units (see Appendix 4C) which include training materials with tasks and activities. Language improvement gets initial priority and thus fulfils one of the principles I have argued for – that in the case of non-native language teachers, a language improvement component has to be built into an SLTE course. The trainees are led into the “knowledge of English as a linguistic system” in order “to develop their ability to use that system for the purpose of communicating”. Although content under this head is itemised in grammatical terms such as ‘review of tenses’ or ‘modal verbs’, the materials themselves are actually task-based, input interspersed with activities (but more of this later). It may be that the syllabus designers deliberately use the familiar structural items in content sub-headings so as to allay fears of trainees towards unfamiliar terminology. The change and innovation literature (see section 2.1.7) is replete with evidence of teachers who resist efforts to change them (Wagner 1991 and Stoller 1994). And therefore being sensitive to context and culture and recognising and narrowing down mismatches between the trainees’ ideologies and that of the syllabus is understandably an important issue for the curriculum developers.

Secondly, the need to increase awareness of the need for and the use of English in Bangladesh together with its place in the secondary school curriculum is presented in an appropriate manner. It initiates trainees into needs analysis, looking at aims and objectives and analysing the objectives of English teaching in secondary schools as laid down by the Ministry of Education. Differences between first, second and foreign languages are highlighted focusing on the different approaches necessary to teach them. Language as code and language as communication are distinguished and a brief outline of teaching methods (grammar-translation, direct, audio-lingual, structural and the

communicative approach –with, mercifully, no ‘eclectic’ approach) are presented. An updated reading list with popular methodology books from the eighties are available for trainees (see Appendix 4C) to supplement class input. This appears to be influenced by one of the principles which states that trainee teachers should be fully aware of the needs, goals and objectives of the course. Trainees are made aware of the needs, goals and objectives of the course of their students in secondary schools but are they absolutely clear about the goals of their own course? This is taken up in chapter 7.

Thirdly, a major share of the course content is devoted to the skills and techniques of teaching the English language ranging from presenting new language and oral practice (with its focus on discussions, group/pair work) to the development of the skills of listening, reading, writing, including pronunciation. This emphasis on skills and techniques is only natural as the course is aimed at ‘teaching teachers to teach’. The manner in which all these are presented is discussed below under methodology. ‘Visual aids’ include contextually relevant and easily accessible ‘realia’ that may be used to considerable effect instead of time-worn aids like ‘flannel boards’ (used in the old syllabus) that most teachers are unlikely to handle in their entire lives. Interestingly, trainees are introduced (for the first time) to techniques of simple blackboard drawing and even on how to use the blackboard (Shrubsall 1992 states that teachers usually block students’ views when they write on the board).

Fourthly, the course content focuses on lesson planning with an emphasis on aims and objectives, on understanding stages in lessons and on balance and variety. In the old syllabus, the schemes of work and lesson plans were grouped under prose, poetry, grammar and composition (clearly a product-oriented approach). The content areas also cover testing and evaluation, drawing on distinctions between formative and summative evaluation, between progress and achievement tests and between testing language elements and language skills. Last but not least, trainees are initiated into ways of constructing test items. All these are extremely relevant to the training of an EL teacher. Overall in the revised syllabus, the content appears to include areas that are generally considered important for an SLTE course that aims at preparing EL teachers within a communicative language teaching framework.

Finally, the course content deals with the practical work that is vital to a teacher education programme. Besides the writing of lesson plans and schemes of work, trainees undertake the reviewing of textbooks, the preparation of teaching aids, the evaluation and designing of classroom activities, the construction of test items and last but not least, micro teaching among peers. This is followed by practice teaching at the end of the course (see section 4.3.1.4).

#### **4.3.1.3 Proposed Methodology**

Within the broader concept of syllabus design, Hutchinson and Waters (1983) advocate a *task-based* syllabus where content, input, language and task are combined (see Long and Crookes 1992 for an SLA-based rationale supporting a task-based language teaching syllabus). Although Hutchinson and Waters have referred to a language learning syllabus (linguistic knowledge and topic knowledge is developed and applied to the solving of a communicative problem i.e. a task), I would argue that the principle of the task-based approach could be applied to a teacher training syllabus too. The task is seen as central to the methodology. The tasks in this programme have been drawn up mostly on the basis of a needs-analysis-as-the-starting-point approach (advocated by Long 1985) and therefore appear relevant (see Appendix 4D for sample of activities).

The input and content (received knowledge) is related to tasks or ‘activities’ as they are called in the training manual, which in turn engage trainees in discussion, analysis, sharing of ideas, evaluation or problem solving, so as to relate ideas to practice. Thus the input is not meant to be used as ‘teaching’ materials but as Allwright (1981) has put it, as ‘learning’ materials by encouraging trainees into a mode of interaction with the input. Wallace (1991) has argued that ‘received knowledge’ inputs can be taught and learned more ‘experientially’ by using appropriate techniques and I believe that these sort of tasks are meant to fulfil such an objective. The underlying assumption of this proposed methodology is a focus on process and adheres to the ‘enquiry-oriented approach’, the advantages of which I have discussed at length in section 3.2.3. The course developers have thus attempted to introduce an *educational* perspective (in place of a *training* orientation) by promoting enquiry, analysis, reflection, evaluation and, most importantly, informed decision-making. This educational perspective (see section 3.3) has been strongly emphasised in teacher education in order to avoid what

Widdowson (1987b) has called the narrow “dress-rehearsal approach” of training programmes, and instead, to encourage trainees to operate within a given classroom context on the basis of an informed and principled line of action.

The proposed methodology illustrates the theory of teaching that is encouraged in a communicative approach to learning. The trainees themselves are being groomed towards a similar methodology in keeping with the professed aims of the revised communicatively-oriented *English for Today* textbooks in secondary schools (see sections 1.2.2, 1.2.3). One of the principles I have extolled in section 3.4.5 is that the methodology of the SLTE programme needs to match the theory of teaching/learning being advocated in the classroom. The methodology appears to be doing that. Thus the curriculum developers ask the teacher trainers to practice what they preach.

Lecturing should be minimised. Instead, the trainer should encourage the trainees to participate in the lectures themselves, by asking them questions and involving them in discussion.  
(Trainer’s Manual 1993-1994: iv)

The emphasis thus is on “active learning” and “involvement”. The developers claim that this participatory approach has an additional advantage, that of improving the trainees’ own command of English. The importance of using the target language in all class activities and discussions is not only laid out in bold letters at the beginning but trainers are reminded from time to time that classes must be “conducted entirely in English”. A rather autocratic decree but this emphasis on the language improvement of teachers is in line with the principle that a language improvement component is essential for non-native speaker teacher-trainees in an SLTE programme.

A further point relates to a specific instruction to trainers at the beginning of each unit.  
Please do not do the activities for the trainees – **the purpose of these tasks is to help the trainees to learn.**  
(Trainer’s Manual 1993-1994 – passim) (emphasis in original)

This kind of instruction (and it is repeated in every unit) may seem strange but in view of the prevalent educational culture (as described in sections 1.3.2 and 4.2), it is pertinent. In a scenario where any classroom action is considered fully product-oriented with an element of summative evaluation underlying it, and where a learner-centred developmental ethos indulging risk-taking or error-making is simply not acceptable in



society, and where there is an over-powering belief in ‘empty’ pint-pots in need of authoritative guidance, it is only natural for trainers to take control and gladly provide answers, and for trainees themselves to be only too eager to seek help.<sup>28</sup>

Against this backdrop, it is possible then to understand how innovative in nature the methodology proposes to be. Trainers and trainees are basically being asked to switch from a ‘classical humanistic’ educational ethos to a ‘progressivist’ one (see Table 1.2) where individual development, experiential learning, learning responsibilities and the ethos of ‘learning how to learn’ are promoted through a process-oriented approach. All this appears desirable in terms of current orientations to education. However, given the mismatches in ideology, in cultural norms, in classroom practices, in the designated roles and expectations of stakeholders in the ELT scene, as well as bearing in mind the disheartening track record of educational reform world-wide (see sections 2.1.6, 2.1.7), one obviously cannot be complacent about its success. In this respect, Widdowson’s observations regarding a second language teaching syllabus can be applied to this EL teacher training programme as well:

A syllabus is simply an inert specification. Only when it is actualised through classroom activity can it have an effect on learning. The syllabus is a scheme for teachers and its influence on learners is only indirect, mediated by methodology.  
(Widdowson 1990: 39)

So far I have analysed the theoretical value or ‘construct validity’ of the revised TTC syllabus without any reference to its actual use in the classroom. In terms of Breen’s (1989) distinction between the theoretical validity of teaching materials (*materials-as-workplan*) and their empirical value (*materials-as-process*), I have examined the syllabus and the materials as ‘work-plan’. But, in order to understand the phenomenon of the ‘syllabus-in-process’, it would be necessary to go into the classroom and see how this syllabus was being actualised. This, however, is beyond my present brief.

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<sup>28</sup> Indeed, it would be no surprise if some enterprising publisher had already supplied the answers to the activities in the form of guide books by now!

#### **4.3.1.4 Practice teaching**

It is generally accepted that teaching practice and the supervisory element is one of the most useful, interesting and valuable components of a training course (Holden 1979, 1984, Gower and Walters 1983, Wallace 1991). Yet it is unfortunate that the issue of practice teaching is treated, in effect, like a nominal appendage here. In fact neither the time allotment nor the mode of supervision of practice teaching appear to have followed the general trend of promise otherwise shown in the revised syllabus. Although trainers are asked to be “prepared to demonstrate useful teaching techniques to trainees, and ask individual trainees to demonstrate these techniques themselves to one another (micro-teaching)”, given the time constraint, there is very little scope for demonstration of techniques by trainers within the course content (Hoque 1996). It is a paradox that whereas the underlying assumption in the revised syllabus appears to favour the reflective or enquiry-oriented approach, one of the major sources of reflection i.e. to link into experiential knowledge, is not fully utilised. Teaching practice or classroom teaching (whether observed or actually carried out by trainees themselves) is a rich source of experiential knowledge that could profitably be exploited in the training process. It is therefore unfortunate that this aspect has not been given due emphasis in spite of the availability of a wealth of suggestions offered, among others, by Ramani (1987), Wallace (1991), Wallace and Woolger (1991), Woodward (1991), Cullen (1991a, 1995), Wajnryb (1992), Yin (1994), Ur (1996), and Richards (1998).

A further point may be raised about the timing of the practice teaching slot. It is scheduled during the third term when trainees have already started worrying about their impending final examinations. During this time, trainees are based at selected schools and undertake supervised practice teaching in their two elective subjects. A supervisor is appointed to a group of trainees in a particular school or group of schools. The supervisory element needs a great deal of attention if it is to play a significantly supportive role in the learning process of the trainees (this is elaborated in chapter 7). As the programme stands, each trainee is assessed on the strength of the final observation by the TTC supervisor when the trainee chooses to teach whichever of the two elective subjects s/he wants. As English is, on the whole, a subject most trainees are not confident about, only a third of the EL trainees elect to do an English practice

class – the rest prefer to teach their other elective subject (source: Dhaka TTC). Again as the supervisor is assigned to a group of trainees by site rather than by subject, it may well be that the EL practice teaching class is supervised and assessed by someone who specialises in a totally different subject. As a result, the quality of supervision during this phase is open to question. It is regrettable that this practice has not been altered with the introduction of the revised syllabus. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the English assessment is subsumed under a general organisational structure that regulates the entire B.Ed. programme.

#### **4.3.2 The role of teacher trainers**

Trainers responsible for teaching English should, in theory, be English specialists but, in practice, it is seen that nearly a third are MA graduates in other subjects (interview data 1996). Moreover, most lecturers, apart from those at the Dhaka TTC, have not had an education in teaching. With a few notable exceptions particularly in the Dhaka TTC, some of the lecturers themselves have a poor command of the language (Cullen 1991a, Hoque 1996). With the new syllabus in recent years, special training facilities have been earmarked for English specialist lecturers. In view of the general status of teaching in the country, the value of such courses for the professional development of trainers themselves cannot be overstated.

This problem of trainers is further exacerbated by the staffing structure at government colleges which follows a system of transfer with promotion so that more competent members of staff are actually promoted out of the TTCs into colleges of general education. The significant problem lies in the fact that each TTC has only one post of associate professor and so it is almost impossible for an assistant professor of English to move up to the next position without moving out of the TTC and perhaps never coming back. Consequently subject specialists at the TTCs seldom stay very long. This sort of organisational structure cannot bode well for EL teacher training. Moreover, in the case of English it seems particularly difficult to find specialists to fill the positions that are on offer. A UNDP Report in 1992 showed that 53.77% of all lecturerships were vacant at the TTCs. The situation has not improved very much today (interview data 1996). Unless teacher training colleges are given separate status as institutes of education and are dissociated from general colleges and unless policy changes advocate

the appointment of specialist lecturers with transfers within TTC colleges only, the problem of trainer quality cannot be addressed.

In attempting the gargantuan task of providing appropriate EL teacher training for secondary schools, an imperative would undoubtedly have to be the development of a team of trained teacher trainers to facilitate this process. Though trainers or even teachers are not in a position to design their own syllabuses, it is hoped they may be able to interpret and modify their syllabuses in the process of translating them into action. They thus need to have the necessary knowledge and expertise to evaluate, modify, and adapt syllabuses and course materials as required. They need to facilitate the training process through a socio-psychological perspective and in terms of a methodology which is consistent with the aims and purposes of the course. In addition, they need to have the required skills to formally assess trainees on progress and achievement. This last requirement demands trainers to construct appropriate test items which can assess trainees within the valid norms of testing procedures (cf. the backwash effect of examinations in schools). At present, assessment tasks still remain somewhat biased towards content rather than towards application, as is evident from samples of TTC term-tests and the B.Ed. final papers (see Appendices 4E, 4F.1 and 4F.2 for samples of test papers).

#### **4.3.3 The dynamics of the syllabus design**

In this section, I focus on some issues that have relevance to the analysis I have already undertaken. In addition, I attempt, where possible, to deconstruct the underlying assumptions of curriculum decisions particularly in terms of context and culture (see section 2.1.6), thereby linking into the central tenet of my argument—the importance of arriving at curriculum design decisions within one's own terms of reference.

The first point I make is in connection with the tension displayed by the TTC curriculum developers in attempting to maintain a balance between two opposing educational ideologies that lead in different directions in terms of curriculum design, materials and methodology. As White (1988) has pointed out, no curriculum or teaching decision anywhere is value-neutral and problems arise when such a value system strikes a discordant note with the value system prevalent in society. The

curriculum developers are aware of this. They know they are encouraging a process-oriented, heuristic learning perspective into a system which nurtures a transmission view of knowledge that is teacher-directed and content-driven. Therefore the articulated philosophy of teaching appears rather ambiguous at times. For example, it is said, “The emphasis should be on active learning and on the involvement of the trainees in developing their own effective learning styles”. Yet instructions towards trainers are didactic and authoritarian as seen in statements like “lecturing should be minimised” and “it is ....essential that all English classes are conducted entirely in English”. There appears thus a tension between the issues of promoting independence and upholding institutionalisation.

To understand the nature of this tension, I briefly refer to some ‘innovation’ models and strategies. Chin and Benne (1976) present three strategies of change described as *power-coercive*, *rational-empirical* and *normative-re-educative*. The *power-coercive strategy* tries to force people to change or act in some way considered to be beneficial by the powers that be. Such a strategy assumes inertia in the system and is tackled with an imposed set of plans. Applied to educational reform, the need for change comes from an outside source and is authoritative. *The rationale-empirical strategy* assumes that people are rational beings and once evidence is shown that benefits will come from adopting an innovation, people will automatically adopt the change. This is obviously leaving too much to chance but may have effect when users are already sympathetic toward a particular action. *The normative-re-educative strategy* treats change as a complex phenomenon where the assumption is that people act according to values and attitudes prevalent in a given society and culture. Therefore accepting change may require changes to deep-seated attitudes, beliefs and behaviour. It necessitates an open, adaptive and collaborative approach, involving all those affected by the change process.

This last strategy obviously fits in with the ideology of Huberman’s (1973) *problem-solving* model of innovation where it is the eventual users who identify the need for change and the change process is seen as a bottom-up approach. However, as a safety-valve, Havelock (1971) offers his *linkage model* which is considered a “synthesis” model where strategies are contingent on the problems to be solved so that developers may embrace a multiplicity of roles as suggested by Stoller (1994) and Markee (1997). In terms of bridging cultural gaps, Jin and Cortazzi (1998) have advocated a ‘cultural

synergy model' which works towards a 'mosaic' of identities. This ties in with the *diffusion-of-innovations* perspective (Rogers 1983) which sees innovation as a social process and not just a technical matter (see section 2.1.7). Thus the emphasis is on treating innovation as cultural change. In this perspective the critical determinants are *the nature of the innovation* as perceived against the *context* and *culture* in which the innovation is to be used.

Most of the research on curricular innovation has been carried out in North America, Britain and Australia where there are relatively decentralised traditions of educational management, and therefore reveal a scenario that suggests *a problem-solving model* implemented through *a normative-re-educative* approach as being probably the most successful combination. However, as I have indicated in my arguments (*passim*), based on a diffusionist perspective, countries like Bangladesh with its own educational ideology operating in a specific setting within a more centralised system might need to deviate from 'standard' ideas and norms. They therefore need to operate along the lines of a *linkage model* or a *synergy model* which can draw on different models and work with their own terms of reference. It is this model that the TTC curriculum developers appear to be embodying as they struggle to find a compromise between the *power-coercive* and the *normative-re-educative* strategies in their attempt to cope with the degree and manner of change they wish to adopt.

The syllabus developers are sometimes condescending and sometimes authoritarian – like the 'benevolent dictators' of history. And so the orientation of the syllabus developers arises from what Nunan (1988) has described as working with numerous areas of possible conflict. They realise that though the majority of trainers and trainees may desire explicit instruction, they have planned to follow a non-traditional approach. There are two modalities of approaching this issue—they either negotiate (which they reject as they know that negotiation does not exist in the essentially hierarchical culture of Bangladesh) or they impose. In the words of Nunan:

....if they are strongly committed to the syllabus with which they are working, or if the institution is fairly rigid, they may wish to concentrate, in the early part of the course, on activities designed to convince learners [trainers in our case] of the value of the approach taken.

(Nunan 1988: 18)

Hence, all instructions to trainers sound authoritarian. I have argued all along, certain factors may arise that propel the curriculum into more conformist and conservative ways than would normally be accepted. This tension is evident in parts of the course material too, particularly where the developers grapple with the idea of *language as communication* and *language as code*, knowing fully well that language is generally understood to be *code*. In trying to convince trainers and trainees of the utility of language as communication on a socio-linguistic level, they lose sight of the pedagogic level and of the demands of the system when they make statements like:

*Our aim is the process of communication rather than the content of what we say or write.*

*Mistakes are important only if they prevent communication.*

*Learners of a foreign language need plenty of practice in using the language, including making mistakes.*

*Until foreign language learners have reached a high level of proficiency, fluency and communication should be their primary aim.*  
(Trainer's Manual 1993-1994: 28)

The *fluency-accuracy* debate is portrayed in simplistic terms, characterising the bandwagon approach to communicative teaching that has actually done a disservice to CLT (Swan 1985, Thompson 1996). Such moderate and reasonable pronouncements as the one below by Hutchinson and Waters are ignored by the developers in trying to wean trainers and teachers away from the traditional approach to EL teaching.

Although communicative competence encompasses more than just linguistic competence, linguistic competence is nevertheless an essential element in communicative competence.  
(Hutchinson and Waters 1983: 101)

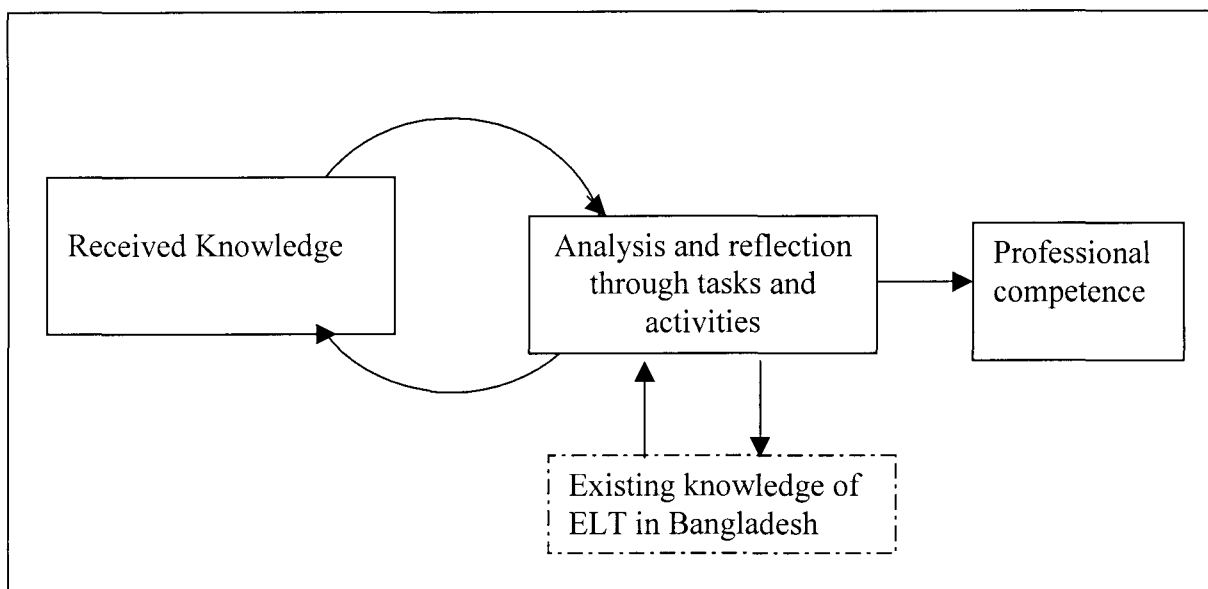
The TTC writers appear to have got into a bit of a morass here. However, if these statements are exploited as a basis for class discussions where trainees are encouraged to evaluate them in the light of their own experience and their own classroom settings, this could be an example of trainers appropriating materials to suit their own contexts and for their own purposes and would additionally serve to raise awareness. More importantly, such an activity would serve the purpose of engaging with trainees' experiences, beliefs and attitudes. My thesis argues that teacher education programmes

need to draw out teacher beliefs, interact with them and use them as an anchor to develop a teaching philosophy by subsequently linking into the formal course input.

Returning to the issue of innovation and change, it only goes to show how complex the innovation process is, in reality. In spite of all the ecologically appropriate metaphors like trading in “a cultural market place”, using “a sociological imagination”, tuning into “local rhythms” (Holliday, *passim*), it is admittedly a very difficult task and curriculum developers work under many constraints. Mainstream curriculum theorists may be uncomfortable with this compromise and with the certain amount of fuzziness that underlie the assumptions in this syllabus. Judged by its own terms of reference and within its own contextual identity, this fuzziness, however, has a dynamics and a validity all its own. As Jupp and Norris (1993) maintain, a discourse is coloured by the social contexts within which it is imbedded.

Following on from this discussion, I attempt to conceptualise the underlying model of SLTE in this training document (see Figure 4.2). On close scrutiny, it is found to adhere to an *applied science model* (with received knowledge at the core of the programme) but with a broader vision in terms of the methodology of discussion, analysis and reflection. From this point of view then, the *reflective approach* as understood here is not a model of SLTE as such (as proposed by Wallace 1991), but is addressed as a methodological issue. However, it is a powerful procedure and may be utilised to great benefit. As I have argued in section 3.4.1, even the traditional ‘craft model’ may be strengthened by introducing an analytic enquiry-oriented approach (see Figure 3.2 where I depict a ‘macro-dimensional craft model’ of SLTE). The TTC developers’ adherence to the reflective methodology transforms the orientation of the model from a positivist to a constructivist one. It displays a process-oriented approach but is linked in a somewhat covert manner to product-oriented aims and objectives. Within this perspective then the syllabus may be located somewhere in the middle of a process-product continuum. Hence it may be considered a compromise model and may be termed a *broader applied science model of SLTE*.





**Figure 4.2: A broader applied science model of SLTE as represented by the revised TTC syllabus**

Compared to Wallace’s reflective model (see Figure 3.7, section 3.4.3), there are two major differences. First, *experiential knowledge* and *practice* are not overtly exploited in the TTC model. There is an implicit reference to current practices in the manifold tasks and activities where trainees are asked to discuss what things are like in EL classrooms but the reference is not to personal practice or experience but to a knowledge in general of the status of teaching in Bangladesh. Thus the principle of reciprocity in the *reflection* process, or more importantly, the combination of Schön’s (1983) *knowing-in-action* and *reflection* phenomenon, much emphasised by Wallace, is absent in this model. Wallace’s reflective model argues for an approach that has a reciprocal relationship so that trainees can “reflect on the received knowledge in the light of classroom experience, so that the classroom experience can feed back into the ‘received knowledge’ sessions” (Wallace 1991: 55).

Secondly, Wallace places a great deal of importance on recognition of *the pre-training stage* which develops trainees’ existing conceptual schemata or mental constructs that include ideas, beliefs, attitudes and the necessity of active interaction with these previously held mental constructs during the training process. This element too is missing in the TTC model. This is particularly unfortunate as most teachers on the

course are on secondment and therefore possess not only direct experiential knowledge of teaching but also an array of pre-conceived ideas and beliefs about ELT (see section 6.2.4). My thesis is formulated around the issue of teachers' personal beliefs and attitudes and I argue that a training programme remains marginal unless the training perspective allows the elaboration and development of teachers' current schema about language learning and teaching and finds ways of engaging with them and subsequently linking them to available theories. An important purpose of SLTE is to enable teachers to clarify their personal beliefs and attitudes, and this may be attempted by drawing on Wallace's inclusion of stage one i.e. interacting with *the pre-training stage*. It may be argued that such a step would address the constructivist orientation that this model appears to be pursuing in a rather uncertain manner. At the same time, it would recognise the importance of teacher thinking in the process of teacher education.

#### **4.4 Summary and conclusion**

In this chapter I have shown that English teacher education provisions for secondary schools in Bangladesh are generally inadequate both in and outside the TTCs. I have subjected the model of the revised SLTE programme to an investigation through a process of appraisal. In doing so, I have attempted to answer my first research question related to the nature of the course (see Introduction). I have explained and confirmed existing ELT-related phenomena so as to clarify the rationale for the recent revision of the course. Steeped in the classical humanistic educational ethos that favours a 'pint pot' approach through a top-down transmission of knowledge, it is no surprise that the *previous* SLTE model showed an adherence to an 'extreme' applied science paradigm of professional development.

Against this setting, a theoretical analysis of the *revised* SLTE programme reveals the extent of the innovation that has been attempted. Although it still appears to adhere to an applied science model (albeit with a broader perspective), it has adopted a moderate process-oriented approach in terms of objectives, course content and methodology encouraging some active trainee-involvement through discussion and reflection. On the downside, experiential knowledge is not overtly exploited and most importantly, there is no apparent recognition of trainees' mental constructs that constitute their existing

ideas, beliefs, and attitudes. Furthermore, there is a disappointing approach to practice teaching and the supervisory element.

I have further attempted to deconstruct the tension apparent in some of the theoretical constructs in the syllabus—the holistic versus the atomistic approach, the process-product pull, the learner-involvement and authoritarian anomaly—and have argued that this may be explained by the dilemma in trying to reconcile two opposing ideologies (the progressivist orientation of the syllabus and the classical humanistic perspective of the users). In line with the theory of treating ‘innovation as cultural change’, I have maintained that the syllabus, within its own terms of reference, demonstrates its unique dynamics and validity.

In relation to the principles of SLTE that I have formulated in section 3.4.5, the model adopts three of the major tenets I have emphasised. These are (a) the notions of recognising teacher development as continued professional growth extending beyond the course, (b) theoretical knowledge seen as being complementary, and (c) the language improvement of trainees receiving initial priority. However, it is also pointed out that the syllabus is only an inert specification and depends upon actualisation through effective implementation for its success.

To enable me to draw the relevance of this training course to the issue of teachers’ prior beliefs and attitudes, I need to present the findings from my empirical work, where I undertake a study of two groups of EL secondary school teachers, one practising and the other undergoing training. But before that, in the next chapter, I present the approach, design and methodology of my study.

## CHAPTER 5

### The research design and methodology

#### 5. Introduction

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), all research is guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world (*ontology*), how it should be understood (*epistemology*) and the manner in which it should be studied (*methodology*). The researcher is thus bound in a network of ontological, epistemological and methodological premises which provide an interpretive framework, “a basic set of beliefs that guide action” (Guba 1990:17). Thus a research enquiry is primed by a set of ideas which serve as points of reference and give direction to the process. In this chapter I discuss the dominant ideas that have served as my points of reference and have contributed towards the conceptualisation of the design and the methodology of my research.

In addition, in educational research, there has been a gradual shift in emphasis from a discussion of *method* towards that of *methodology*. According to Cohen and Manion (1994: 39), “The aim of methodology is to help us to understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific enquiry but the process itself”. This has led to a discussion of the stages of social investigation in the research process. As a result, there is a tendency towards a fairly detailed treatment of the procedures, the strategies and the fieldwork relationships that make up a bulk of the discussion before moving on to the matter of data collection and analysis. This is endorsed, among others, by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), Burgess (1984a), Cohen and Manion (1994) and Bryman and Burgess (1994). I therefore include details of this process as well.

After briefly presenting the research questions in section 1, I present the ontological premise which informs my choice of research paradigm in section 2. This leads on to sections 3 and 4 where my epistemological and the methodological orientations are advanced. I demonstrate the approach of my investigation including the preparatory procedures for fieldwork and the methods used for collecting and analysing data. Alongside I explain the measures I adopt to keep within the regime of accepted

research practice. In the final section, as part of the transparency policy in the research discourse, I briefly report my perceptions of the research process itself.

## **5.1 The study**

In my introduction to this thesis, I have explained the purpose and aims of my study. I set out to investigate EL teacher perceptions about teaching English in secondary schools in Bangladesh and attempt to link this phenomenon to the assumptions underlying the recently revised teacher training course at the TTCs. This is significant as the course fulfils an *in-service* function with around 80% trainees on a year's secondment from their respective schools.

Informed by developments within psychological and ecological traditions (discussed in sections 2.1.6 and 2.2.1) I start with an assumption—that English language teachers in secondary schools in Bangladesh operate under a personal belief system constructed through experience, tradition and socialisation. Through this study I attempt to investigate its truth or otherwise.

### **5.1.1 The research questions**

As the focus of my study is the TTC English programme and its relevance to secondary school teachers' perceptions and beliefs about ELT, the research questions are:

- ◆ *What are the assumptions and principles that underlie the theoretical framework of the English programme of the course?* (This has already been dealt with in chapter 4)
- ◆ *How do classroom practices reflect teachers' current beliefs and attitudes towards English learning and teaching in secondary schools?*
- ◆ *How do teachers themselves articulate these beliefs?*
- ◆ *What kind of belief systems do trainee-teachers (who are also practising teachers) bring to the TTC course?*

On further examination I end up with a corollary which brings me back to the effectiveness of the SLTE course, my primary concern, and as I am dealing with teacher perceptions it seems logical to investigate therefore this final point:

♦ *How do trainee-teachers perceive the knowledge gained from the training course in terms of applicability in their respective contexts?*

### 5.1.2 The structure of the study

The study is divided into 3 parts:

- a. The analysis of the English component of the training course in terms of the principles culled from the literature on second language teaching and SLTE. This is based on an analysis of curricular materials and documents (see chapter 4).
- b. The investigation of the belief systems with regard to English language teaching of a group of practising EL teachers.
- c. The investigation of the belief systems with regard to the same issue of EL trainee-teachers attending the teacher training course.

The field study comprising b. and c. above was undertaken in two phases, the first from June to September 1994 and the second from September to December 1996.<sup>29</sup>

I intended to study two sets of teachers, practising and trainee. First, I studied practising teachers in a particular setting – the English lesson in the secondary school classroom. To this end, I observed 43 classes in 14 secondary schools in Dhaka and interviewed 31 English teachers immediately after observing them. During the second phase, I obtained questionnaire responses from 29 trainee-teachers specialising in English at the Dhaka Teacher Training College and followed this up by interviewing 15 of them.

## 5.2 Selecting a research tradition

Historically, systematic inquiry has been characterised by two opposing paradigms, the *positivist* and the *naturalistic* on the basis of five axioms presented by Lincoln and Guba (1985: 36-38),<sup>30</sup> in terms of the nature of reality, the dependency of the knower to the known, the nature of knowledge in temporal and contextual terms, the possibility of

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<sup>29</sup> This second visit had to be postponed several times due to a prolonged period of political unrest in the country when educational institutions were closed down for indefinite periods and normal life disrupted.

<sup>30</sup> In more recent times, Guba and Lincoln (1994) have presented a social science-based typology in which social science scholars are divided along *positivist*, *postpositivist*, *critical*, and *constructivist* paradigms based on ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions in the discipline.

causal linkages and the role of values. These two research traditions by underpinning their polarity of assumptions have favoured different and sometimes opposing methodologies of investigation. Applied to social science and educational research, they have been translated into two broad paradigms which have acquired a variety of terminology. I use the terms employed by Cohen and Manion (1994), the *normative* and the *interpretive* paradigms. Underpinning the *normative* orientation is the rationalist-positivist stance that the basic function of research is to uncover value-free facts and truths independent of the researcher which can operate as cause-effect relationships and allow generalisations to explain further phenomenon. The *interpretive* paradigm allows a recognition of realities multiply constructed by individuals inhabiting that reality and therefore knowledge is seen as time-bound, context-bound and value-laden in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping. The former rests upon the creation of a theoretical framework which can be tested by experimentation, replication and refinement while the latter sanctions naturalistic description and interpretation. Though positing an alternative perspective in the interpretive approach, Cohen and Manion hasten to add that it is offered not as a competing paradigm but as complementing the experimental stance. The anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) contrasts these two traditions by stating that an experimental science is in search of law while an interpretive one is in search of meaning.

In applied linguistics research, this dichotomous distinction has been likewise followed. Grotjahn (1987) has argued that there are two pure paradigms, the *exploratory-interpretive* at one end and the *analytic-nomological* at the other, with a range of mix and match in between depending on variables in relation to the method of data collection (whether collected experimentally or non-experimentally), the type of data yielded by the investigation (qualitative or quantitative) and the type of analysis conducted on the data (statistical or interpretive).

Van Lier (1988, 1990), has offered a slightly more viable interpretation of the research traditions in applied linguistics. He has analysed research in terms of two parameters, *intervention* (according to the extent the researcher intervenes in the environment) and *selection* (according to the degree the researcher prespecifies the phenomenon to be investigated). These emerge as a continuum so that at one end there may be a formal laboratory experiment and at the other, an ethnographic portrait of a classroom in

action. Within the intersection of these two parameters there are four other stances—*controlling*, *measuring*, *asking-doing* and *watching*. Thus a researcher can work on a continuum ranging from a highly selective, intervening and controlling role to the opposite end which sanctions a non-selective, non-interventionist and watching stance (in a way, similar to Grotjahn's two pure models). Van Lier's analysis thus clarifies the researcher's role in ontological and epistemological terms which subsequently determines the methods or procedures appropriate for the type of investigation chosen.

Underpinning all discussion of research traditions appears to be fundamentally the "ontology" i.e. how one views reality—whether as a tangible objective entity allowing fragmentation into independent variables or a complex phenomenon that can be studied only holistically. The ontology of the researcher then is the point of departure for the enquiry. As my concern is to understand the perceptions of teachers in the EL classroom who operate within a specific context, my ontological considerations approximate to the naturalistic approach.

### **5.2.1 A social orientation to educational research**

Scott and Usher (1996:1) maintain that "educational research must of necessity be social in its orientation". This approach within the naturalist-interpretive paradigm views education as a social institution and educational research as a kind of social practice in accordance with it (see section 2.1.6). Such a perspective allows flexibility in accounting for beliefs and practices among participants and stakeholders in the educational process.

The term *constructivism* used by Guba and Lincoln (1994) clarifies the notion of multiple beliefs and realities. It states that knowledge consists of those constructions about which there is relative consensus among those who are competent and trusted to interpret the substance of the constructions. However, multiple 'knowledges' can co-exist when equally competent or trusted interpretators disagree, depending on social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic or gender factors that differentiate the interpretations. This may be further elaborated by insights from *connectionism*, *cognitive constructivism*, and *developmental contextualism* which claim knowledge is constructed rather than stored and learning involves continuous active construction,



connection and reconstruction of experiences within personalised contexts (see section 2.1.3 for contributions of cognitive psychology to applied linguistics). The multiple ‘knowledges’ generated by secondary school teachers operating within a particular context is what my study is aiming at. Guba and Lincoln further claim that these multiple constructions are subject to continuous revision with changes likely to occur when relatively different constructions are brought into juxtaposition in a dialectical context. The ‘*dialectical context*’ is what I propose to undertake in my effort to link the data findings to teacher education (see chapter 7).

This social orientation helps researchers to consider each enquiry on its own merit thus discouraging predictive generalisations. The search for generalisations in educational and social research is probably unrealistic since “it is questionable whether generalisable and predictive knowledge is possible in the social domain” (Usher 1996: 14) (see section 5.1.4 for generalisability and other related issues). Hargreaves and Fullan (1992) too maintain that indeterminacy in educational research is unavoidable. This is primarily because the subject of study in the social sciences is human beings who are freewill agents with their own subjective thoughts and socialised preferences about their behaviour and even this behaviour varies substantially from place to place, and over time. The second language classroom including its participants is notoriously indeterminate. Breen (1985: 151) perceives the second language classroom as coral gardens to be approached with “a socio-cognitive frame of reference which will give access to mutual relationships between social activity and psychological changes”.

### **5.2.2 A rationale for the ethnographic approach**

Having presented my perception of reality as being essentially social which does not admit orderly events or simple cause-effect relationships, I present now the epistemological considerations for adopting the ethnographic approach for my research.

Ethnography, the major method of inquiry in anthropology, is traditionally the description of groups of people who are perceived to possess some degree of cultural unity (Heath 1982, Hymes 1982). In recent years, it has been adopted with advantage by sociologists, linguists and social psychologists. Its application has grown in education with an increasing dissatisfaction with experimental designs and quantitative

processing of piecemeal or controlled data (Ellis 1990a). Underlying the ethnographic tradition are two assumptions about human behaviour closely linked to 'constructivism'. The first believes *context* has a significant influence on behaviour while the second conceives of reality as constructed by the *subjective perceptions* of those involved within that context (Watson-Gegeo and Ulichny 1988, Atkinson 1990) – see also discussion on developments in cognitive psychology in sections 2.1.3, 2.2.1. Gaies 1983 (cited in Ellis 1994) points to the advantages of gaining insights into people's conscious thought processes and of identifying variables hitherto unacknowledged.

Van Lier (1988, 1990) presents two views of ethnography, a *weak* and a *strong* view. The *weak* view sees it as a tool for unstructured and unsystematic observation, possibly throwing up questions which may then be tested by formal experimentation. The *strong* view sees it as theory-building, a valid research paradigm at the core of a humanistic approach to social science enquiry. Van Lier upholds that second language classroom research is best served by taking the stronger view of ethnography and Chaudron (1988) characterises it as a qualitative process-oriented approach to the investigation of the language classroom, supporting it as a rigorous tradition in its own right.

Ethnography is guided by two principles: the *etic* and the *emic* standpoints (terms coined by Pike 1964). These are two alternative ways of viewing the same reality – the *etic* standpoint being the view from the outside, either random or with a set of presuppositions and the *emic*, from within, noticing those features of the scene marked as significant by internal criteria. Watson-Gegeo (1988) maintains that as the *emic* or culturally specific framework used by the members of a society or culture for interpreting and assigning meaning to experiences, differs in various ways from the researcher's ontological or interpretive or *etic* framework, it therefore needs to be taken into account. Van Lier (1988, 1990) has attempted to clarify the two principles further by using the term *holistic* (in place of *etic*) so as to include features contained in the wider culture. *Emic* characteristics refer to the rules, concepts and beliefs of the people functioning within their own group while the *holistic* principle (stressed by Mehan 1979 and Heath 1982) emphasises relating data obtained from phenomenon under study to existing knowledge about other components of the culture. Van Lier maintains the *emic* and the *holistic* viewpoints underlying ethnography serve to give it a distinct edge

over measurement-oriented investigation. I would add that combining these two viewpoints is an example of triangulation much favoured in research.

Thus ethnography contrasts markedly with the experimental approach in its assumptions, methods and attitudes to evidence. LeCompte and Goetz (1982) distinguish ethnography from experimental research in the following ways:

- ◆ Ethnography gives central importance to *context*, interpreting an event in connection to its surroundings.
- ◆ Researchers go in with an *open mind* so that data may be gathered before the formulation of hypothesis. Thus experimental researchers hope to find data to match a theory while ethnographers hope to find a theory that explains their data. The latter points to ‘grounded theory’ as advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967).
- ◆ *Subjective experiences* of the research participants are accepted as valid knowledge thus fulfilling one of the basic axioms of naturalistic enquiry—“the knower and the known are interactive and inseparable” (Lincoln and Guba 1985: 37). LeCompte and Goetz (1982:32) claim that by admitting the subjective experiences of both participants and investigator into the research frame, “ethnography may provide a depth of understanding lacking in other approaches to investigation”.

Ethnography may be undertaken through a variety of approaches. In the second or foreign language learning context, a *micro-ethnographic* approach examines behaviour in a small social group as in a classroom while *macro-ethnography* looks at behaviour in a much larger organisation such as an educational system. Long (1980 cited in Ellis 1994) makes a distinction between *participant* and *non-participant* ethnography, with the researcher taking a regular part in class activities or remaining outside the classroom events being observed. Further, ethnography aims to employ all reasonable methods of data gathering and analysis to investigate an educational setting or problem. And so it combines both *qualitative* and *quantitative techniques* as and when appropriate to setting, aims and tasks.

Watson-Gegeo (1988) attempts to untangle the terms *ethnographic*, *qualitative* and *naturalistic* which are used interchangeably in the educational literature. She argues *qualitative research* is an umbrella term for many kinds of research approaches and

techniques including ethnography, case studies, analytic induction, hermeneutics, life histories, as well as certain types of computer and statistical packages. *Naturalistic research* is a descriptive term that implies that the researcher conducts observations in natural, on-going environment where people live and work. By these definitions then ethnography is qualitative and, like many other types of qualitative research, also naturalistic. However, ethnography differs from other forms of qualitative research in “its concern with holism and in the way it treats culture as integral to the analysis (not just as one of the many factors to take into consideration)” (Watson-Gegeo 1988: 577)

Based on the discussions so far, the key features of ethnography can be identified as:

- a. a focus on natural settings,
- b. the use of participant and non-participant observation,
- c. the use of subjective views and beliefs of participants to structure the research,
- d. an avoidance by the investigator of manipulating the study variables,
- e. a flexibility in the choice of methods for data gathering and analysis,
- f. the importance of context and the wider culture as integral to the analysis

These then are the principles that underlie my research methodology. By operating within these principles the ethnographer’s goal is to provide a description and an interpretative-explanatory account of how people behave in a setting. More importantly, it is non-evaluative in nature and thus presents “a phenomenon as it is, rather than what it lacks or is not” (Shirley Brice Heath 1998).

The discussion so far has highlighted the positive aspects of ethnographic research but as with all endeavours, ethnography has its difficulties too. These are taken up next.

### **5.2.3 Some issues of concern**

As ethnography has acquired a heuristic quality which does not work within clearly defined parameters of scientific conduct, the criticism levelled against it is that it lacks the rigours required in terms of *reliability* and *validity* as understood within scientific inquiry. *Reliability* refers to the consistency of the results obtained from a study as well as to its replicability. *Validity* refers to the extent to which a piece of work actually investigates what the research purports to do as well as to the generalisability of the

result from samples to a wider population. However, in the light of the characteristics of ethnographic research, it may be pointed out that it would be untenable to administer such criteria to measure its efficacy as a research approach.

LeCompte and Goetz (1982) in their much quoted paper have propounded at length the various strategies for improving reliability of data in ethnographic research. They maintain that “attaining absolute validity and reliability is an impossible goal for any research model” (p.55) and pursuing dichotomous choices is “unnecessary, inaccurate, and ultimately counterproductive” (p.54). They propose recognising and handling problems relating to a) the status of the researcher, b) the choice of informants, c) the social situations and conditions, d) the analytic constructs and premises, and e) the methods of data collection and analysis. More importantly, they emphasise the goal of ethnography, unlike empirical research, as not testing theory but as being an analytic description of an intact cultural scene. Hence, generalisability and establishing causality is not the purpose of ethnography in keeping with its naturalist-interpretive orientation. Instead, the issue of validity in the applicability of results may be addressed by aiming at *comparability* and *translatability* of findings. *Comparability* requires that characteristics of the group studied (details such as sex, age, etc) or constructs are generated and defined so clearly that they can serve as a basis for comparison with like and unlike groups (Wolcott 1973). *Translatability*, on the other hand, assumes that research methods, analytic categories, and characteristics of phenomena and groups are identified so explicitly that comparisons can be conducted confidently. For comparative purposes phenomena are chosen to study because they are similar or because they differ systematically along particular dimensions.

Furthermore, problems of idiosyncrasy and uniqueness may lead to the claim that no ethnographic study can be replicated. This issue too may be dealt with through refinement and validation of constructs and postulates that individual cases may not require replication of situation. And as LeCompte and Goetz (1982: 34) state, “Because human behaviour is never static, no study can be replicated exactly, regardless of the methods and designs employed”.

Another concern that has been voiced is the issue of the *subjectivity* of the researcher. Hammersley (1984) points out that data may be contaminated by the researcher’s

impact on the setting, by the process of selectivity that is necessarily involved, and by the fact that researchers may not be immune to the effects of interests and values. However, Lincoln and Guba (1985) reject the notion arguing that ‘bias’ and ‘perspective’ are of central importance to social and human research and therefore advocates working in terms of *dependability* and *credibility*. Indeed Hymes (1982) claims ‘intersubjective’ validity in ethnographic research is more important than any other validity, thus underlying the need for developing ways of obtaining validation through such techniques (such as audio-visual recordings) so as to share interpretations with other researchers (an example of triangulation, working on a ‘truth-as-agreement’ principle). Thus the approach to subjectivity which instead of being viewed as a negative feature affecting the trustworthiness of findings, is seen as an essential characteristic of the nature of all qualitative enquiry. Jensen and Peshkin (1992), in identifying two kinds of subjectivity, one in the conduct of research and the other in the construction of text, stress that this new angle on subjectivity focuses on how and to what effect the self and the subject intersect. Thus the researcher’s role is to clearly and conscientiously indicate the nature of this interaction (see ‘reflexivity’ in section 5.4.1).

It is generally accepted now among proponents of ethnographic research that these issues of concern can be approached by outlining theoretical premises and defining constructs within the particular context of research problems and goals in a rigorous manner. Further Burgess (1985c) points out that although a variety of methods are available to the educational researcher, they must have a sound theoretical basis for being employed. In addition, one of the defining characteristics of present-day ethnography is its *multimodality* (i.e. combining a variety of methods and techniques) and these not only illustrate the openness of the research approach but more importantly enhances credibility through the process of *triangulation* which advocates studying phenomenon from more than one standpoint (Cohen and Manion 1994). The final word then is that researchers in this tradition have to establish the principles of conduct in an uncompromising manner – see section 5.4.5 for the step I have taken.

### **5.3 Pre-field work**

In this section and the next, I present the methodological considerations that guided my selection of procedures for carrying out my investigation. At the outset, I would like to

stress that I did not enter the world of research with the sort of naiveté identified by Reid (1990: 335) when he stated that a new researcher might think that simply deciding on a research design would “result in clear, clean implementation of methodology and in unambiguous results”. Far from it. I was aware of the complexity of the endeavour I was about to undertake. And yet doing ethnographic fieldwork was, as described by Ball (1984: 70-71), in many respects “like riding a bicycle: no matter how much theoretical preparation you do there is no real substitute for actually getting on and doing it”. This became apparent even at the planning stage of my fieldwork.

### **5.3.1 Selecting sites**

For the purposes of my research it was necessary to undertake a sufficient survey of secondary school classrooms and so I dipped into the *survey*, *sampling* and *case study* literature to resolve the matter of selecting sites. According to Cohen and Manion (1994), surveys are the most commonly used descriptive method for collecting data in educational research. Nunan (1992) states the purpose of a survey is generally to obtain a snapshot of conditions, attitudes, and/or events at a single point of time with the researcher remaining objective and non-manipulative to avoid contamination of data.

An important question is the nature and size of the population covered by the survey. As it is not feasible to collect data from the entire population, researchers resort to sampling, the concern being to ensure that the sample is representative of the population. Fowler (1988) dismisses the idea of a representative numerical size and argues that sample adequacy depends on aspects of sample design and sampling procedures. A key consideration concerns the subgroups within the population that need to be separately identified. Stenhouse (1985a: 12) maintains covering “as wide a range of relevant variables as possible”.

As time was a key factor (I had four months to collect my data), I aimed at a cross-sectional investigation through appropriate samples. I treated each sample as a ‘case’ study. Case studies have been variously defined and described in order to highlight its prominent features by Adelman et al. (1976), Denny (1978) Stenhouse (1985a, 1985b) but it may suffice here to adhere to Nunan’s definition:

A case is a single instance of a class of objects or entities, and a case study is the investigation of that single instant in the context in which it occurs.

(Nunan 1992: 79)

As the key principle of the case study is to investigate how an instance from a class or phenomena functions *in context* by appealing to *the experience of the participants* (Stenhouse 1985a: 28), it adhered to ethnographic principles. Denny (1978) states that the case study examines a facet or particular aspect of that culture or subculture under investigation. This too was in line with my purpose to investigate *a particular aspect* (English language teacher perspectives) within the subculture of the English class in the secondary school. Moreover, Walker (1980) maintains the case study favours *condensed fieldwork* and does not have to stretch over a very long period of time (unless it is a longitudinal study). In addition, Stenhouse (1985a) suggests that in appropriate situations, the multi-case or *multi-site case study* offers the possibility of studying a wide range of issues and questions with regard to a single phenomenon.<sup>31</sup> He further maintains that the multi-site case study allows condensed fieldwork undertaken on a number of sites, possibly offering an alternative approach to studies based on sampling and statistical inference. Furthermore, Yin (1994) maintains case studies can be used *as evidence to support theoretical propositions*. This suited my purpose – to verify an assumption that EL teachers operate in the classroom through a personal belief system. More interestingly Duff (1990 cited in Nunan 1992) distinguishes between ‘case study’ and ‘case study methodology’. The former involves detailed description and analysis of an individual subject whereas the latter is particularly characteristic of the study of a particular aspect and may be *based on specific groups*. I take Duff’s second category and treat the case study as a mode or method subsumed under the ethnographic approach.

At this juncture it may be pointed out that attempts are made to differentiate ethnography from case study. In the typology offered by Stenhouse (1985a), case studies are classified not in terms of approach but in relation to research purpose. Yet Heath (1998) claims that unlike ethnography, case studies are used for evaluative

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<sup>31</sup> Stenhouse (1985a), perhaps the most ardent exponent of the case study method in educational research, has offered a typology of case studies: *neo-ethnographic* (in-depth investigation of a single case by a participant observer), *evaluative* (to evaluate policy or practice), *multi-site* (carried out on more than one site) and *action research* (investigation carried out by a classroom practitioner in a professional context).



purposes only – a narrow view, in my opinion. Nunan (1992), however, maintains that the multi-site case study probably approaches ethnography the most, particularly when it attempts to investigate issues and questions over a range of variables.

To summarise, I adopt (subsumed under the ethnographic approach) the *case study methodology* (proposed by Duff 1990) to carry out *a condensed study* (suggested by Walker 1980) of *a particular aspect of a specific subculture* (upheld by Denny 1978), on *multi-sites* selected to cover a range of variables (advocated by Stenhouse 1985a) in order to find evidence to *support (or refute) an assumption* (propounded by Yin 1994). My sample of classrooms and teachers is what Stake (1995) calls the *collective* case study which coordinates data from several teachers or several schools.

As my intention was in the first instance to observe teachers in actual classrooms, I looked for sample sites that represented a wide range of variables within classroom settings. According to Hammersley (1984) selection is usually based on convenience though the typicality of the case is also considered (Ball 1984). Woods (1986: 50) favours the typicality factor on the grounds that “the more representative the school the greater the chances of external validity of the results”. As it was difficult to draw conclusions about the typicality of schools without making unwarranted assumptions, I follow Stenhouse’s (1985a) advice. He suggests cases should be selected to cover the range of variables judged to be important in relation to the theme of the study. He does not contend that each sample should cover all the variables. In fact he says:

The principle should probably be to build the collection from similar pairs (or threes) of cases and try to see that this collection of pairs covers as wide a range of relevant variables as possible”  
(Stenhouse 1985a: 12)

This tends to maximise the differences within the collection of cases though, as he cautions, it is important to bear in mind the need to look for differences within apparent similarities. Stenhouse (1985a), points out that sampling in qualitative research, and particularly in the case study method, though similar in procedure to the quantitative tradition, has a different focus in that it aims at gaining a depth of understanding phenomenon in all its complexity rather than attempting to generalise the findings from the sample to the population. This is in accordance with the purpose of ethnographic research (as discussed in sections 5.1.2 and 5.1.3).

With time and financial constraints, I could not hope for any widespread sampling. Therefore keeping within the regime of sample design and procedures discussed above and choosing sites on the principles of feasibility or convenience, I set out to obtain a wide enough data set that would allow planned comparisons to be made at the end of the day. I concentrated on schools in and around Dhaka, the capital city, hoping to group them in twos or threes along dimensions that I rationalised would represent a variety of institutions and populations. In time I came up with a list of 19 schools and through a process of selection and elimination over which sometimes I had little control, narrowed it down to 14. Denzin (1970) has called for 'space triangulation' and this is fulfilled by the cross-sectional approach of investigating 14 schools and 43 classrooms from years 6 to 10 along a range of variables (see section 6.1).

During the second phase of my fieldwork, to study the perceptions of a group of trainee-teachers with the English specialisation, site selection was confined to the only teacher training college (TTC) in the city. Sample selection was not a problem as participants were present on one site. I was also fortunate in terms of teacher variables, as the trainees had divergent teaching backgrounds in an assortment of secondary schools from all over the country. The contextual features of schools and participants is given in section 6.2.1. They display a wide representation of schools, classes and teachers and thus characterise an extensive sample of the trainee population.

### **5.3.2 Gaining access**

Cohen and Manion (1994) maintain that negotiating access to research sites is an important stage in the investigation. I approached the schools in one of three ways:

- a. Finding mentors to facilitate entry.
- b. Using previous connections (some of the English teachers had attended in-service workshops and ELT courses run by my institute where I had been a teacher trainer).
- c. Physically presenting myself with a letter of introduction from my institute (previous appointments not being a standard procedure in the local school culture).

In each case, access was negotiated with the head teacher, the gate-keeper and authority in the setting. Approaching the head teacher through a mentor appeared the best option.

In Bangladesh, having a mentor, when one needs anything done, is a socio-cultural imperative otherwise one can face unnecessary obstacles. Shamim (1993) too maintains making acquaintances and establishing friendship is a preliminary to school research in Pakistan. Therefore I had a friend exploring sites for me even before I returned for my fieldwork. In addition, drawing on previous contacts helped. Rather than introducing myself straightaway as a researcher, in a few places I refreshed links to teacher training courses where I had been involved as trainer. I was usually welcomed here particularly as I was a University ‘professor’<sup>32</sup>. In two places, I went in without a mentor’s help, and even after I had explained the purpose of my visit, I found my position extremely insecure. Had I not been a university ‘professor’, I am sure I would have been shown the door. Indeed, I had to wait for hours to be given an audience with the head teacher.

Gaining access during the second phase of data collection when I interviewed trainee-teachers at the TTC was facilitated by a previous colleague and currently head of the English department there. Moreover, the principal of the TTC showed a positive interest in the purpose of my research (“See what you can do for the poor English teachers of our country. They need all the help they can get”). The mentor concept proved particularly useful in this case. It was when I had to go chasing the trainee-teachers sometimes in their dormitories and their dining rooms or when trying to find a suitable place to do interviews that I faced some difficulties but on the whole the fieldwork undertaken during this second phase proved much less eventful. Perhaps my favourable experience can be contributed to the fact that this was a graduate level institute and therefore most of the research participants did not feel unduly threatened by the continued presence of a researcher. But then I had been introduced as the friend and colleague of the department head and that made my presence relatively stable.

### **5.3.3 Towards a code of conduct**

There has been much discussion on the ethical concerns in educational and social science research involving the conduct of the researcher over what is investigated, how the data is collected and analysed, the way in which the data is disseminated right

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<sup>32</sup> University and college teachers are held in high esteem in society and are always referred to as ‘professors’ irrespective of their position in the professional hierarchy.

through to the post-field work years (Burgess 1985b, Burgess 1989, LeCompte et al. 1992, Cohen and Manion 1994, Scott and Usher 1996). For the dissemination of data, teachers/learners' names are disguised to maintain anonymity and courses and locations are changed so as not to jeopardise schools and individuals. Moreover, researchers have to take decisions that will maintain confidentiality but at the same time will further knowledge of institutions and processes while protecting all those concerned.

There is a debate about an 'open' as against a 'closed' approach to research. To be open means telling the truth, informing informants about what the researcher is doing, reporting findings honestly, and never subjecting informants to risk or harm. However, it may appear too simple a dichotomy. The line between 'secret' and 'non-secret' may become blurred and even the area of 'informed consent' might appear dodgy (Burgess 1985b). Cohen and Manion (1994) state that it is not always possible to identify all potential ethical questions or the nature of correct research behaviour. From my own experience I would argue that the degree to which one could be 'open' or 'closed' is linked to the cultural norms of the society one is dealing with.

Adhering to the researcher's code of conduct particularly during the first phase of my investigation put me in some rather awkward situations. When I went into the schools I explained the focus, purpose and mode of my research to the head teachers. While the first two objectives were greeted with approval by some head teachers (sites 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 – see too section 5.5.2), the third regarding my plan of visiting the schools in three phases seemed to disconcert them and they said they would consult their senior-most English teacher. Understandably the English teachers were ill-disposed to the idea of being observed, particularly through an extended period of observation (see section 5.3.4). Later on in the staff room, when I tried to explain to the teachers details about my research and what the practical implications of this work could be, they seemed vaguely interested. Contrary to my expectations they did not ask me any questions. At one site (site 3), an acquaintance on the teaching staff gently advised me not to display my 'academic' knowledge as she felt it would alienate me.

Consequently I proceeded more cautiously in my explanations although I tried to maintain a general openness towards the teachers involved. I was constantly aware of my potential for intrusion and disruption—I sympathised completely with their anxiety

about being observed and by someone who they considered a ‘specialist’. As forewarned in the literature, I tried my utmost to engage in “building trust” (Lincoln and Guba 1985) and to strike an amicable relationship wherever possible. I always asked if I could come to their lesson although the head teacher might have already given permission and even told the concerned teacher that I would be sitting in on the class. I always made myself available before and after observations to talk to them. Above all, I made it clear that my role was non-judgemental and non-evaluative assuring them of anonymity and confidentiality.

I found that sharing the same culture as the participants placed more demands on me than I suspect would have been on someone from a different culture. Furthermore, even interpersonal responses varied in different sites according to the gender of teachers, the status, locality or reputation of the school. For example, the reputable government schools seemed less hospitable towards my presence. Perhaps they were concerned with keeping up a front. In fact, ‘transparency’ is not practised in the local culture – there is constant face-saving and a great deal of image-management. I also encountered varying degrees of power relationships. I came across instances of gender bias particularly in the large government boys’ schools. The fact that I was a woman, and a Muslim woman at that, placed constraints on me. I took particular care to dress more plainly and extra modestly (not that I am much different otherwise!) and behave in an appropriately conservative manner when I visited these schools.

Thus striking a balance in my conduct as researcher required not only research skills but a certain amount of interpersonal skills as well, drawing on shared knowledge of culture and norms of interaction. Too much familiarity with the head teacher would alienate me from the teachers while too much familiarity with the students was seen as being improper (“they [students] will get wrong ideas and become disrespectful”, Teacher in site 5). Too much information given out about the research put me in an unfavourable light. Therefore there was often a juggling act on my part – between the norms of research behaviour and its eco-transferability to a specific culture (see Holliday 1994a, Coleman 1996a for issues of appropriacy and social context).

The autobiographical details presented here can be justified by Burgess’ comments:

As field researchers, we need to make public the ethical and political problems that we encounter in our research if we are to understand how compromise is to be achieved and how knowledge can be advanced alongside the protection of our informants.  
(Burgess 1985b:158)

#### 5.3.4 Changes in research plan

At the outset I should point out that it was fairly impossible to plan anything definite in my research. I was operating in a general atmosphere of tentativeness that is a distinct feature of the local culture. Not sticking to set agendas, being overly relaxed, with unexpected things happening at unexpected times is a common feature in Bangladesh. Being part of that culture, I was therefore prepared to be flexible.

It was originally planned that the first part of my research (observation of EL classes and post-observation interviews of EL teachers in secondary schools) would be confined to 6 schools in 3 phases (2 weeks each) over a period of 4 months to ensure a more representative data set from a single class. I also planned to observe the same classes by the same teachers during the second and third phases. This would allow for 'time triangulation' as advocated by Cohen and Manion (1994) and to cope with the variations of focus of activities during the school year as pointed out by Ball (1983). The three phases were also seen as *exploratory* in the first phase to a gradual focussing of issues in terms of *emerging themes* in the later phases (Spradley 1980, Vulliamy et al. 1990). The process of data collection and data analysis were also perceived of as an on-going feature, as in the case with ethnographic research.

However, things did not work according to plan, but I was not very disheartened as Burgess (1985a) has pointed out that modifications and reformulations may occur when carrying out fieldwork. I approached a total of 19 schools and in the light of the researcher's potential for disruption (see section 5.3.3), only one school (site 4) agreed to allow me to observe classes for the entire three phases. That was perhaps due to the strong school ethos and the managerial capability of the head teacher.<sup>33</sup> All the others

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<sup>33</sup> I also knew her previously through some community work I was involved in a few years ago. This points to the mentor factor in not only gaining access but also in getting acceptance and support.

found a variety of excuses to decline (such as pre-tests coming up, practice for cultural activities, etc). Two schools agreed to have me visit a second time but were tentative about letting me observe any teacher more than once (“You can see very well from one class what’s happening. Why do you need to sit through all this again?” – sites 1, 2, 11). Although I did not give up the idea of pursuing teachers for a second observation (I kept this idea to myself – so much for research ethics!), I tried to turn this situation to my advantage by studying more sites which would give a wider picture.

I approached the schools again and offered to come on single-phase visits. Finally, 14 schools agreed. I spent a period of one week each in the schools. This was preceded by an exploratory one-day visit during which I met teachers and students informally and also asked, wherever possible, to sit in on a class for about 15-20 minutes. I was able to do this in 5 schools. It was a valuable experience in terms of orientation towards observation and note-taking in keeping with van Lier’s (1990) recommendation of a period of apprenticed experience in the art of observation. I carried out the actual observations and interviews during the scheduled one-week visits. I was able to watch a range of teachers, from seniors (with teacher training) in higher classes to novice teachers in lower classes. If a participant teacher was unavailable which was the case on a few occasions, I could ask to go to another. Although I reduced the time I spent in each school, I was able to spread my investigation laterally by observing more teachers.

I had originally planned to audio-record the lessons but faced a number of problems. Firstly, it caused anxiety which I felt would affect the data. Secondly, some of the senior teachers refused to comply. Thirdly, in the few cases that I was able to record after having placed the recorder in an inconspicuous place, the sound quality was poor and often did not pick up voices. Finally, the sight of a cassette player together with a stranger in the class caused no end of curiosity among the learners, reminding me painfully of the “observer’s paradox” (Labov 1972: 181). After a few futile attempts, I gave up the idea of recording lessons and had to trust to my observation recording skills. Although I always sat at the back trying to blend into the background, the students around me occasionally craned their necks to see what I was writing. At this point I stopped myself and later wrote my field notes in retrospect. With the post-observation interviews of teachers however, I deliberately avoided using a recorder so as to allow them to respond naturally.

The post-observation interviews with the teachers could not always be done at length as a few of them had to go immediately to teach another class or if it was a senior teacher, had a meeting to go to. So some of the discussions took place as we walked along corridors and staircases or had a quick break in the staff room. As a result, I was able to carry out 31 interviews in all. I was particular about following up the teachers immediately after a lesson as I did not want too much time to elapse so as to ensure reliability of their memory and comments in compliance with the *immediacy condition* pointed out by Ericsson and Simon (1984).

Finally, I had to abandon the idea of using learners' perspectives in my study. In fact on 5 occasions I had managed to get learners to discuss their views on the textbook in focus groups. However, I found I ran the risk of incurring grave displeasure of the school authorities. Notwithstanding my clarifications, they saw it as extremely disruptive, an act of near-sedition on my part to be sitting together with the students and speaking on equal terms about something that concerned the authorities only. The classical humanist educational ethos with its rigid value systems could not allow such behaviour. So rather than risk being alienated from the school and more importantly the English teachers, I reluctantly gave up the idea of interviewing learners.

#### **5.4 Study procedures**

Methods and techniques for research do not exist in a vacuum. As already argued, the researcher's role in ontological and epistemological terms determines the procedures appropriate for the type of investigation chosen. Indeed the methods for conducting the research must have a sound theoretical basis (Burgess 1985c). Therefore although a wide range of procedures, both quantitative and qualitative, are available on a continuum from non-interventionist to interventionist and from unstructured to structured, my selection is guided and determined on the one hand, by assumptions underlying the naturalistic enquiry embodied in the ethnographic approach, and on the other, by the content, purpose and focus of my research.

As the ethnographic approach (section 5.2.2) adheres to two basic principles, the *context* and the *subjective perceptions* of participants as being consequential to the data,



the techniques used to capture this natural setting is more at the open, less structured end of the methodological spectrum. At the same time I am aware of Watson-Gegeo's (1988) reminder that true ethnographic work is systematic, detailed and rigorous, rather than anecdotal or impressionistic. This places a grave responsibility on the researcher in terms of collecting and interpreting data.

As reiterated in the literature, combining a variety of methods and techniques allows for a process of triangulation so that findings may not be equated as artefacts of any specific method of investigation. In my study I use three methods of collecting data: classroom *observation*, *interviews* (stimulated-recall, semi-structured and at times unstructured) and *questionnaires*. Furthermore, I explore a range of publications, documents and reports to obtain secondary data. I also discuss the type of analysis I undertake in order to arrive at my findings, and at the same time consider context and the wider culture as integral to the data analysis.

#### **5.4.1 Observation**

The setting for my study is the English language classroom in secondary schools in Bangladesh. Allwright and Bailey (1991) state that there are two basic ways of collecting data from the classroom – by *direct observation* or by *self-reporting by the participants* involved. I have chosen *direct observation* and then triangulated the data with post-observation *interviews* to obtain teachers' perceptions on classroom events.

Observation in educational research is considered a conscious, intentional action rather than a mere noticing of classroom event. It is a pivotal activity which plays a crucial role in classroom research and in principle can reveal a complete picture of the classroom dynamic (Hammersley 1990, Allwright 1993, Hopkins 1993). There are different schemes in educational research literature that categorise classroom observation. For example, Seliger and Shohamy (1989) offer a binary distinction into 'structured' and 'open' observation, Wallace (1991) talks about 'system-based', 'ethnographic' and 'ad-hoc' procedures with Hopkins (1993) offering a more detailed distinction: 'systematic', 'structured', 'focused' and 'open' observation. Cohen and Manion (1994) maintain the type of observation undertaken is not random since it depends on the type of setting which might occupy any point in a continuum from

‘natural’ to ‘artificial’. Of course, the observer’s degree of participation, the issue of objectivity and the research approach also determine observation category.

With regard to the observer’s degree of participation, Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) present 4 categories of observer roles: *complete participant*, *participant as observer*, *observer as participant*, *complete observer*. The most common form of classroom observation is the complete observer or as more commonly known, the *non-participant observer*. Traditionally, a series of systematic observation instruments have been used but I reject these on the grounds that two important features, *context* and *participant perspectives* which are the basis for my description, cannot be handled through system-based schedules. I thus reject the Sinclair and Brazil (1982) orientation which assumes characteristic roles in class as given, illustrating the etic-before-emic approach.

My role as a non-participant observer put some limitations on me. A classroom has a history and a culture and as a short-time visitor there was a possibility that I could overlook small nuances so vividly illustrated by Walker and Adelman (1976). Secondly, distortion to the natural course of events was possible due to my presence (the observer’s paradox). Thirdly, although I professed to be objective and open, there was the possibility of bias. In answer to the first, I could claim insider knowledge with a sense of belonging in social, psychological and professional terms. The second limitation has been generally accepted in the research literature; nevertheless, I try to keep as low a profile as is possible under the circumstances. As for the third limitation, if it can be called a limitation, a counter argument is forwarded below.

Nunan (1992) claims that there is no such thing as ‘objective’ observation and that what we see will be determined in part by what we expect to see. Our vision is also influenced by the instruments we develop, adapt or adopt to assist us in our observation. As LeCompte and Goetz (1982) assert, the researcher and the researched in the naturalistic approach are both influenced by prior conceptions and multiple perspectives. Being a language teacher for nearly two decades and being in a completely familiar setting watching someone do what I did myself almost every day, it was impossible to turn off all my own ideas, knowledge and beliefs, just like Peck (1988 cited in McDonough and McDonough 1997: 113), who felt he could not pretend to be “a Martian watching a cricket match”. Peck goes on to claim that he used a mix of

his insider knowledge and the approach to form categories to get semi-controlled but rich data. In the same vein I would argue that my background knowledge of classroom processes, of teaching EL, of applied linguistics all sensitised me to the process of active noticing and interpreting. This view of the mutual interdependence between social settings and the accounts given of them is referred to as “reflexivity” by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) where everyone involved is part of the construction. The element of reflexivity in research text is increasingly being seen as a strength rather than a weakness as advocated by Woolgar (1991) and Usher (1996).

In a similar vein, Pickering (1995) uses the metaphor of the ‘mangle’ to present the picture of a dialectic between the researcher’s agency, the research tool’s agency and the ever-changing outside world. Nevertheless I guard against ideas or convictions prejudicing the recording or the interpretation of the data, by triangulating the methods of collecting data in order to obtain both the *emic* and the *etic* viewpoints. I also aim at maintaining objectivity by the clarity of my constructs and through the rigours of description, analysis and discussion (see section 5.4.5)

An ethnographic orientation demands a naturalistic and comprehensive approach to the classroom setting. A naturalistic classroom observation is an everyday lesson with its usual participants in real time – an intensive undertaking. The principle data gathering instrument is description – aiming at ‘thick’ (detailed) rather than ‘thin’ (restricted) description (Geertz 1973) with the description being as comprehensive as possible in terms of speech, behaviour and all facets of the physical setting. However, as I was working with a predetermined topic (teacher beliefs), and as I was not using any electronic recording device, I followed Chaudron’s (1988) advice of not presenting a complete ethnography of the classroom but to provide certain details or analyses of specific areas of interaction within my theoretical framework of reference. Moreover, Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out descriptive observation and data-first do not necessarily go hand in hand and add that description can be selective and focused, particularly after an issue has been chosen for further investigation. Seliger and Shohamy (1989) state that description which starts with a narrowed down scope and a preconceived topic shares some of the features of a deductive approach even if the hypothesis to be tested is in a sense more diffuse. I believe my study is the kind Seliger and Shohamy refer to, since I start with certain assumptions regarding teacher beliefs.

Thus in order to enable me to obtain relevant data, I drew on Malamah-Thomas' (1987) Wajnryb's (1992), McDonough and Shaw's (1993) ideas in order to observe classroom processes. I concentrated particularly on teacher talk and behaviour that keyed in with the purpose of my research. For the post-observation interviews, I attempted to examine teacher beliefs by focusing on what I call 'key incidents' following Calderhead's (1988) notion of 'critical incidents' (see too Tripp 1993, Nunan 1996). Although Calderhead understands these as having a particular significance for the teachers themselves, in my study, I identified the 'key incidents' in class during observation, and in the interviews, sought the teacher's clarifications through a process of 'stimulated recall' (Calderhead 1981). This not only provided me with *emic* interpretations but also enabled me to address the issue of 'hidden agendas' in classrooms (Nunan 1989c). Markee (1997) has cautioned researchers to be on guard against what they think "happens" and what "actually happens" in class. I am able to address this problem by taking into account teachers' perspectives.

As explained earlier I had to give up the idea of using any electronic means of recalling data both during observation and the post-observation interviews. The tool I used was *running field notes*, a record-keeping of events as they unfolded. Notes were written during observation or on occasions retrospectively. I followed the advice given by Lofland (1971 cited in Cohen and Manion 1994) in recording observations as quickly as possible and in cursory form when a series of events happened fast, supplementing later with fuller accounts. I also disciplined myself to Lofland's idea that a researcher should never resume observation until the notes from a previous observation were complete so as not to reduce the impact of one set of events by superimposing another and more recent set. Again being in a real time natural setting, there was sometimes ongoing interpretation as well. My field notes are of the two categories defined by Burgess (1984a) viz. *substantive* which is a record of situations, events and conversation and *methodological* which register impressions, feelings and hunches. I also include critical comments on the margins to follow up during the 'stimulated-recall' interviews (see Appendix 6D for sample of observation field notes).

### 5.4.2 Questionnaires

Classified as introspective forms of eliciting information, questionnaires and interviews involve respondents reporting on themselves. Cohen and Manion (1994) state that the use of questionnaires is particularly popular in surveys. They may be oral when responses are elicited by an interviewer or self-completing i.e. respondents read and respond by writing into a fixed format. The advantages of questionnaires are seen as precision and clarity of response as they are controlled by the questions. The nature of questions depends on the kind of information needed and the kind of analysis proposed. Question formats maybe *factual*, *yes/no*, *multiple-choice*, *ranked*, *scaled* or *open-ended*, the last allowing respondents to contribute their individual points of view.

Since I was looking at attitudes and beliefs, I use the *scaled* format, more precisely the *attitude rating scale* devised by Likert (1932). This form of questionnaire presents not questions but statements and asks for degrees of agreement or disagreement with a neutral response in the middle. Likert scales may have 3, 5 or more choices – I have used 5. The advantage in this scaling format is that shades of opinion may be given numerical values and may show up significant patterns on certain statements. However, there are three disadvantages. First the midpoint is difficult to analyse as response may be due to either irrelevance or disinterest. Secondly, people may not be truthful in their responses – for a variety of reasons. Thirdly, people may vary in their degree of caution so that one respondent's 'simple' agreement may be another's 'strong' agreement but this can hardly change the nature of the findings. In the analysis, McDonough and MCDonough (1997) suggest reducing the 5 alternatives to 3 in order to have enough people in all the cells for the expected value. I have retained the 5 alternatives although in the analysis I have not counted the 'uncertain' mid-point value, so as not to influence the collective scoring that show favour or disfavour towards the items provided.

Constructing a reliable questionnaire is difficult and time-consuming in terms of reliability, validity, avoiding redundancy and repetition, and maintaining the independence of items (Nunan 1992). A well-constructed questionnaire is one which is relatively easy to answer, easy to record and evaluate, user-friendly and unambiguous. Cohen and Manion (1994: 93-94) advise against asking questions which are leading, high-brow, complex, irritating and which use double negatives. They also advise

against asking open-ended questions as responses cannot be probed for clarification. In addition, Low (1996) cautions against intensifiers or hedges in language construction that may cause uncertainty while Nunan (1992) advises against asking culturally biased questions. In terms of content, a mix of details pertaining to research objectives needs to be formulated so as to maximise the range of the information elicited. Nunan also emphasises the importance of piloting questionnaires. I piloted my draft on 2 fellow researchers who provided feedback on the complexity of the language and the importance of distributing positive and negative statements equally. Accordingly I revised some of the items.

In my questionnaire, I attempt to reference each item to the objectives of my study so that they link in to teachers' attitudes towards current approaches to ELT, learners' and teachers' roles and classroom processes. It may be reiterated that the revised TTC programme is based on secondary school textbook and curriculum revision in terms of the communicative approach to ELT (see section 4.3). In the process I have drawn from the work of Karavas-Doukas (1996) who conducts a study of teachers' attitudes towards communicative language teaching in Greece. I use the questionnaire to elicit initial responses from trainee-teachers before following up with interviews. I use closed items and ask respondents to tick on a grid under pre-coded scaled answers (see Appendix 6E for sample of questionnaire). The questionnaire responses gave me a framework on which to base the interviews I carried out a few days later. It was, in effect, a kind of a baseline study.

The processing of the data for analysis is done by coding the responses. As the sample size is small ( $n = 29$ ), I code the answers manually. Prior to that, as Cohen and Manion (1994) have suggested, I edit the questionnaires to identify and eliminate any errors made by respondents. Checks are made to ensure completeness (no missing answers), accuracy (arising out of carelessness in responding), and uniformity (arising out of misinterpreting instructions and questions). For the coding, I draw up a table with all the questions down the left-hand side and all the respondents along the top. Each person's response is plotted giving an overview of the data. These results are then examined for possible patterns and also for any significant discrepancies and later used as a basis for the interviews. Although the questionnaire responses are treated to a

quantitative analysis, it is subsequently subsumed into a qualitative format by triangulating and integrating it with the interview data.

A final word about the process of administering the questionnaires may be added. The TTC arranged for the trainees to be present on a particular day. So I was able to explain my objectives, as well as the nature and purpose of my research. I even went through the questionnaire items with them, translating where necessary. I clarified queries and questions. I also convinced them against consultation during the 'task' as I was interested in individual opinion. As before, I explained my role as non-judgemental and non-evaluative assuring the participants of anonymity and confidentiality.

### **5.4.3 Interviews**

An interview is a commonly used eliciting technique through face-to-face interaction. According to Cohen and Manion (1994: 272-273), interviews serve three purposes. First, it may be the principal data-gathering instrument with direct bearing on the research objectives. Second, it may be used to test hypothesis or suggest new ones or as an explanatory device to help identify variables and relationships. Third, it may be used in conjunction with other methods in order to follow-up unexpected results or to go deeper into respondents' motivations and reasons. In my case I use interviews for both the second and third purposes—to test my hypothesis about teacher beliefs and attitudes and to triangulate the classroom observation and questionnaire data by going deeper into actions and responses.

Interviews may have 4 forms: *structured*, *unstructured*, *non-directive* and *focused*. More commonly, interviews are seen as *structured*, *semi-structured* and *unstructured*. In effect the boundaries between each may merge. Lincoln and Guba (1985) see interviews on a normative/non-normative continuum from structured to unstructured. The *structured* format uses questions which are rigidly pre-specified. The *semi-structured* interview has a structured overall framework but allows for greater flexibility in changing the order of questions and for more extensive follow-up of responses. The interviewer in general remains in control of the interview but there is more flexibility and although this format has some characteristics of the structured type, it is regarded more as having a naturalist approach that allows richer interaction

and more personal responses. Nunan (1992) claims the semi-structured interview is favoured within the interpretive research tradition for its control and flexibility and its potential for providing a rich assortment of data. The *unstructured* interview despite its name works with a pre-specified agenda, a set of issues or topics that are used as triggers or starting points. I agree with this and found that as an interviewer, I needed to have a well developed feeling for context and some understanding of the concerns of the interviewees. I used semi-structured and sometimes open-ended questions to allow topics to develop. McDonough and McDonough (1997) state that methodologically, structured and unstructured interviews are not mutually exclusive as qualitative interviewing may lead to structured questions at a later stage for checking details. Conversely, pre-specified structured questions may be used as ground work and for opening up key issues. This too I found to be happening during the interviews I conducted. Another format for interviews is the group interview or the *focus group* interview with 3 or 4 participants. Hopkins (1993) finds this productive as participants can spark each other into perceptive lines of discussion. Although I used some focus group interviews with students, I later abandoned the idea as explained in section 5.3.4.

There are three main ways of recording interview data—*audio-recording*, *note-taking* or *post-interview writing-up*. The first is more commonly used and the data is transcribed and then analysed. The second is useful but may be off-putting and distracting to both interviewee and interviewer. Some researchers like Stake (1995) favour the third method as it can capture para-linguistic and non-linguistic features but the problem of depending on memory remains. Nunan (1992) suggests that supplementing notes with recorded interviews enhances the task of transcribing and interpreting taped data and also allows incorporating biographical variables.

The ‘stimulated recall’ interviews with the observed teachers already described in section 5.4.1 were structured in the sense that I focused on pre-selected classroom behaviour. I deliberately avoided a tape recorder as I wanted responses to be natural. Therefore I wrote their replies down as faithfully as possible immediately afterwards. In the process, I had to resort to translation as the interviews were in Bengali but I am quite confident that I have been able to reflect the true spirit of their perceptions. In the second phase, I carried out semi-structured (at times unstructured) interviews with 15 trainee-teachers who had previous teaching experience. I recorded these interviews and



transcribed them (see Appendix 6G for sample excerpts of interview transcripts). During each interview, I clearly explained my purpose and how the data was to be used. I asked permission to record the interview and then set up my equipment, an inconspicuous battery-operated cassette recorder. I started with structured questions which gave me factual details. Then I used key questions (semi-structured) to draw them into a discussion (see Appendix 6F for the interview schedule). I made references to the questionnaire data and encouraged them to elaborate on the information they had collectively produced. (To preserve anonymity, names were not put on the questionnaires). A range of question types were used to ensure flexibility to allow the trainees to follow-up on issues that appeared close to their hearts. Since I shared the same profession, during much of the interview I had the feeling, as Wallace (1998) has suggested, of taking part in a professional conversation.

#### **5.4.4 Analysis and interpretation of data**

LeCompte and Goetz (1982) state that positivistic researchers hope to find data to match a theory whereas ethnographers hope to find a theory to match their data, what Glaser and Strauss (1967) have called 'grounded theory'. Watson-Gegeo and Ulichny (1988) propose the adoption of a grounded approach to data, the use of 'thick' explanation (taking into account all the factors that may have an effect on the phenomena under investigation) and going beyond description to analysis, interpretation and explanation. Goodson and Walker (1988) argue on strongly focusing on 'portrayal' even at the expense of analysis and explanation and suggest the term 'story-telling'. However, in view of the fact that I start with a specific hypothesis, I cannot pretend to be following this pure ethnographic stance. As already discussed, I show signs of a deductive approach in terms of addressing the data to match a theory.

Nevertheless, I keep within the advocates of ethnographic research requirements where, as van Lier (1990) asserts, analysis must be broad and deep and must be clearly data-based and data-oriented. Creating categories for coding is the first step of analysis. It is vital to the process of organising the naturally occurring stream of behaviour and/or language occurring in the data into manageable units which need to be identified clearly. Standard categories, typologies, checklists are available. But within the ethos of naturalistic enquiry, researchers often tend to devise their own schemes. Hence it is

necessary to have a valid analytic frame that matches the data collected. I have used formulated categories mostly arising from the data and wherever possible, have defined underpinning assumptions to avoid appearing idiosyncratic.

I have generally followed the overall approach advocated in ethnography by Miles and Huberman (1994) who suggest working on 3 key principles: a) *data reduction*, b) *data display* and c) *conclusion drawing and verification*. The first includes coding and clustering, the second develops networks and structured summaries and the third advocates triangulation, comparison and contrast. I have basically drawn on the three key stages to guide my analysis and interpretation from coding, to data presentation to conclusion drawing. I have also drawn on suggestions made by Dey (1993) particularly in terms of finding pathways through my data.

My data set comprises observation field notes which are developed into prose descriptions plus post-observation interview notes, questionnaire results and interview transcripts, including notes written in retrospect. The data reduction of the *observation field notes* together with the *post-observation interview notes* is attempted through scrutinising and scanning for recurrent concerns, common features and events. The data is examined and themes are teased out. This kind of analysis is in tune with the ‘*emergent themes*’ of naturalistic research advocated by Lincoln and Guba (1985). These themes are then used not for a general description but to move towards a set of operative principles that drive EL teachers’ in-class action.

The manner in which I deal with the *questionnaire responses* has already been discussed in section 5.4.2. First a quantitative coding is carried out and the results are then examined for possible patterns and also for any significant discrepancies and later used as a basis for the interviews. Although the questionnaire responses are treated to a quantitative analysis, it is subsequently subsumed into a qualitative format by triangulating and integrating it with the interview data.

The analysis of *interview data* depends on the format used and the kind of data elicited. More structured data may be analysed quantitatively but open-ended, exploratory, ethnographic interviews need to be analysed qualitatively by searching for patterns and themes and by approaching them through the ‘grounded theory’ principle. Cohen and

Manion (1994) also talk of ‘content analysis’ where words, phrases and themes are identified that create units of analysis and then quantified in various ways. In my work I have combined ‘content analysis’ with the concept of ‘emerging themes’ for the analysis of the interview data (see section 6.2.3). At the same time I compared responses to ratings from the questionnaire, focusing on discrepancies if any.

Finally, the analysis of *documentary data* (as in chapter 4) is undertaken within the interpretive frame of the constructivist tradition (see section 5.2.2). When analysing curricular materials, it is borne in mind that discourse is coloured by the educational and social contexts within which they are imbedded. Jupp and Norris (1993: 47) maintain that “a discourse does not exist in isolation but in relation to others”. In order to help illuminate the nature and meaning of a text, my analysis gives considerations to the aims of the authors (the curriculum developers) and their intended audience as illustrated in section 4.3.3.

Thus the data analysis is carried out in two stages, each stage comprising a series of steps. In the first stage, data from observations, interviews, questionnaires and documentation are analysed individually. In the second stage, the data sets are cross-analysed to arrive at a synthesis. Linkages to theoretical perspectives are identified as an aid to examine relationships between the variables and to elucidate meaning. Finally the different sets of analyses and interpretations are “related to other components of the whole of the culture” (Heath 1982 cited in van Lier 1988: 56) in order to obtain a holistic perspective of EL teaching in secondary schools.

#### **5.4.5 Towards credibility and plausibility**

As discussed earlier (section 5.2.3 and *passim*), the issues of concern in ethnographic research have been met by adhering to various principles, among them being construct validity, the reliability of the data collecting instruments, and the discerning role of the researcher in collecting, describing, analysing and interpreting the data. I shall add a further point or two here.

To ensure plausibility in observation data, Erickson (1986) proposes that evidence should be adequate to support interpretation and should come from a variety of data

types. The data should have good interpretative status and any disconfirming evidence should be actively sought, analysed and included as a powerful antidote to a researcher's inclination towards supportive evidence. Although I do not attempt a complete description but focus on certain details or analyses of specific areas of classroom interaction in keeping with my research purpose, I maintain alertness, letting little time elapse between events and their recording. Moreover, the stimulated recall interviews are done immediately after the lessons. I also try to see through deliberate misinformation and guard against any inclination to look for confirming evidence.

Methodological triangulation with different sets of data is used. In addition to classroom observation and probed self-reporting, I triangulate trainee-teachers' questionnaire responses too with follow-up interviews. My study also adheres to space triangulation in terms of multi-site classes exhibiting a range of school, teacher and student variables. In this way I have attempted to establish reliability and credibility.

## **5.5 The research experience: some reflections**

Burgess (1984b) argues for the need to raise questions about the actual problems in the course of the investigation and the ways in which techniques or processes are developed in the experience of collecting, analysing and reporting data. Freeman (1996b: 110) advocates that revealing "the identity of the teller is critical in both a political and an epistemological sense". This view has resulted in autobiographical accounts of the social dimension of the research process, for example in the work of Ball (1984), Littlejohn and Melouk (1988), Slimani (1988, 1989) and Margot et al. (1991). Indeed, in terms of LeCompte and Goetz's (1982) strategies for improving reliability in ethnographic research (section 5.2.3), it may be argued that these "fieldwork confessions" or "inside story" (Woolgar 1991: 22) attempt to make the research activity transparent, consequently serving to enhance credibility. In this context, I discuss some issues that affect the investigation as well as the nature and extent of the data I obtain. Interestingly my experiences reflect the features of a particular culture and illustrate the significance of the social orientation towards ethnographic research discussed in section 5.1.1.

### **5.5.1 The research environment**

There is a general lack of research tradition in schools and hence an overall dearth of research understanding among participants. There was, however, some awareness of survey-type studies in numerical terms. Perhaps that is why the questionnaires during the second phase were the least difficult to administer. Vulliamy et al (1990) maintain there is a relative absence of qualitative research in the field of education in developing countries, and therefore there is a kind of suspicion about the on-going presence of the researcher at the scene. I found this to be true in my case. My original proposal for a longer in-field presence clearly produced apprehension and was rejected. The fact that classroom research findings could be used to promote understanding or advance knowledge or feed into policy decisions seemed remote to the participants.

### **5.5.2 Perceptions of the role of researcher**

The role of the researcher is rarely understood by those not engaged in research.

(Foster 1989, cited in Cohen and Manion 1994: 355)

#### *The Head Teachers*

The head teachers' reactions to my role ranged from apathy to genuine interest. 3 head teachers (sites 1, 2, 11) threw a cursory glance at the letter from my University, called a senior member of staff from the English section and handed me over. They were indifferent to my research. 7 others, however, (sites 3, 4, 5, 6 8, 9, 14) showed genuine interest and discussed at length how it was possible to improve the current situation in ELT. They were equally supportive in making arrangements to observe classes. Generally the English teachers in these schools did not share these feelings. At another school (site 7), a head teacher made it clear that he was doing me a favour since the data would lead to self-enhancement of the researcher (i.e. the study would be used for my doctoral degree). When I tried to explain that this kind of work contributed to an understanding of ELT, he merely gave me a dubious smile. The rest (sites 10, 12, 13) showed a polite interest and after a brief conversation handed me over to a teacher. The head teacher at site 12 wanted an official letter stating her school had participated in this research. Obviously she saw some prestige in this —it was a fairly new school.

At site 8, I was seen as an inspector (“I wish we could get more people to come and observe – this would make my teachers become alert about their teaching”). The head teacher wanted an evaluation of a particular teacher. When I told her it went against a researcher’s code of conduct, she saw the solution in my doing the assessment privately. It was a dilemma the research literature had not prepared me for and I had to use a combination of diplomacy and the neutral metalanguage of ELT to tide me through this predicament.

### *The Practising Teachers*

With the practising teachers, the situation was seen in terms of the researcher and the practitioners being placed in opposing camps. They saw the general purpose of research as evaluative. Their initial perception was of the researcher as evaluator and expert who had gained access and acceptance in order to find their faults and maybe report them to the higher authorities. Hence the underlying atmosphere was of a vague sense of distrust of the researcher. Although with time, initial doubt and suspicion was allayed, there was still some stress and anxiety. When I asked the teachers if they had any queries about the research they just made some very general comments (“See what you can do./ Students don’t want to learn. / What can you do?”) or shook their heads and said nothing. Seeing me as an evaluator prompted them sometimes to put on display teaching such as using techniques they had picked up, like pair work.

On two occasions, the teachers took me to their classes, introduced me as a university professor “who had come to solve the problems of English” (sites 1, 10) and promptly disappeared. I waited for ten minutes in awkward silence before I realised they were gone. Both the schools were large and it would have been difficult for me to track the teachers down. I had explained my purpose and I do not think the teachers could have misunderstood me. The only conclusion I was left to draw was that they did not want to be observed. I ended up doing an informal English lesson with each class.

Some teachers saw me as an expert in ELT and took the opportunity to ask me to give a demonstration teaching 10 minutes before the end of the lesson (sites 4, 7, 9), interestingly enough all female teachers in reputable girls’ schools. So during this period, I actually took two full and 3 mini English classes. Sometimes a teacher would ask me what I had written in my field notes. When I showed my notebook (site 9), there

was great surprise and amusement that I had observed such trivial things. They were also relieved that I did not make any evaluative comments. The common question was “What do you think of our students?” And before I could say anything they would themselves launch into a resigned explanation of their students’ “lack of knowledge” or “poor understanding” or even “lack of brains” (sites 7, 9, 10, 12, 14). But it was just to make conversation and not from any interest in my research.

#### *The Trainees Teachers:*

The trainee-teachers in the second phase of my study appeared to perceive my role as a researcher in a more positive light. They were quite enthusiastic about the nature of my work. We talked about different aspects of teaching and the teacher education programme – hence as researcher and participant we appeared to share common ground. Most of them were keen to give interviews and talked about their experiences and beliefs. Often it was a professional conversation. However, some of them wanted copies of the questionnaires I used hoping it might contain something that would help in their examinations. In a ‘classical humanist’ educational ethos, I was seen as an expert with a tangible bit of knowledge in my hands.

#### **5.5.3 Some factors affecting the study**

Some external and internal factors might have affected the investigation and consequently bits of my data. For example, chance or unforeseen circumstances sometimes played a prominent role. Timing was consequential. There was a pre-test looming ahead and so, classes 9 and 10 would be engrossed in mock tests when the teacher did not utter a single word (site 7). There was a disruption in school as the local MP was expected and with him a promise of some future grant (site 10). Being busy with the head teacher kept 2 teachers away from their scheduled classes (sites 2, 5). During the second phase, my study timing coincided with preparation for the TTC practice sessions thus preventing any training class observation there. The monsoon weather and heavy tropical rains, capable of paralysing life, on more than one occasion, prevented half the class population from attending (sites 11, 13, 14). I could not schedule class observation during the milder months as they coincided with holidays, end-of-year examinations or beginning-of-year settling-in periods. Additionally, in my

seven months of fieldwork in total, I faced 5 days of varying lengths of work-strikes called by disgruntled political parties when everything just ground to a halt.

Finally, there may have been times when the authenticity of the data may have been affected when, for example, teachers indulged in display teaching or stated in their questionnaires and interviews, things which they felt they were expected to say rather than what they felt. Also during observations, they sometimes picked on better students to show off the ability of their classes. Indeed these are unavoidable features of the research process as attested by LeCompte and Goetz (1982).

## **5.6 Summary and conclusion**

In this chapter I have rationalised the approach, design and methodology of my study. An understanding of epistemological distinctions has been attempted in order to make informed choices about the content and method of my investigation. To provide a broad definitional framework, I have favoured the ethnographic approach within the interpretive dimension of social science and educational research, focusing on its emphasis on context and participant perspectives. I have also argued for the appropriacy of the multi-site case study in order to address my research questions.

In addition, I have discussed the preparatory procedures for fieldwork and the combination of methods I use for collecting, analysing and interpreting data, including the measures I adopt to ensure the rigour of my work. The fact that I use multiple methods illustrates the openness of the research approach and, more importantly, enhances credibility through a process of triangulation. I also refer to some of the changes I had to make in my original research plan, the constraints inherent in the situation and the limitations of my investigation. I further discuss my role as a researcher, my perceptions of the research process and the norms associated with it, pointing out that the politically correct approach widely advocated in the research literature may not always be appropriate.



## **CHAPTER 6**

### **Towards an understanding of secondary school teachers' perceptions of ELT**

#### **6. Introduction**

In this chapter I attempt what Clark and Peterson (1986: 258) have called “a synoptic view of the process of teaching”. This view contends that the process of teaching may be understood fully only when teachers’ thought processes and actions are seen in conjunction with each other. With this in mind, I present the findings from two studies that I undertake in order to investigate the nature of the beliefs that Bangladeshi teachers of English, practising and in-service, share in terms of their classroom instructional behaviour. As mentioned in chapter 4, the B.Ed. programme under investigation, although in principle a teacher preparation course, fulfils in effect, an in-service function with 80% course participants on a year’s secondment from their respective schools. Hence the course participants are mostly practising teachers. The first study is an investigation of the perceptions of a group of practising EL teachers in secondary schools while the second is a study of the beliefs and attitudes of a cohort of EL trainee-teachers on a B.Ed. course. I bring together the findings from the two studies and compare the results, focusing on their relevance to the assumption that teachers’ own conceptualisations have a crucial function in curriculum implementation. This is then linked to my thesis on teacher education which argues for a reflexive process between personal beliefs and the knowledge input in SLTE programmes.

The study design and the procedures for data collection, description and analysis have already been presented in the previous chapter. Here I provide a selective description of the data, the analysis and interpretation, followed by a discussion on the findings.

#### **6.1 Data collection 1: Classroom observation and follow-up interviews**

English forms a substantial part of the school timetable at both the primary and the secondary levels. From Classes 3 to 5, it accounts for 14.5% of lesson time. In

secondary school, from Classes 6 to 8, English takes up 7, 8 or 9 lesson periods a week. In Classes 9 and 10 in preparation for the school-leaving state examination, 9 periods are the standard. The lessons at this level are usually divided into preparation for Paper 1 (based on the *EFT* textbook 85% and the Reader 15%) and Paper 2 (grammar, translation, reading comprehension and composition).

The main purpose of my investigation was to understand teachers' underlying assumptions and beliefs that direct their classroom action. I studied teachers in this particular setting – the English lesson in the secondary school classroom. To this effect I observed 43 classes in 14 secondary schools in and around the city of Dhaka and carried out short interviews with 31 teachers immediately following the class observation where I asked the teachers their interpretations of instructional behaviour I observed in class along a 'stimulated recall' approach – see section 5.3.4. As I observed 9 teachers twice, I actually watched 34 teachers in action. I thus carried out *direct observation* followed by 'probed' *introspective self-reporting* by the participating teachers. The former served the *etic* purpose within the researcher's framework while the latter provided the *emic* viewpoint. The nature of my data is thus introspective i.e. the participants looking inward and also empirical i.e. the researcher looking outward.

Within the framework of reference provided by the purpose of my study, I highlight specific features of the teacher's in-class action and speech related to EL teaching. The data is presented in 3 steps. First, classroom processes are categorised in terms of teachers' in-class behaviour (action and speech) as emerging patterns from the field data with regard to their instructional behaviour. Second, the major behavioural features are interpreted through teachers' reflections, introspective remarks and justifications as obtained through the 'stimulated recall' interviews. In the third and final step, I organise the ideas articulated by the teachers in terms of a set of assumptions that appear to guide these teachers' 'operative knowledge' (term derived from Bailey 1996). The analysis is presented in terms of recurrent patterns supported with excerpts from field notes and teacher responses during interviews.

In a separate section (6.1.7), I present the perspectives of 6 teachers on the OTEFL project and attempt to determine the extent to which their orientation towards the communicative approach and the assumptions of the revised textbooks have enabled

these 6 teachers to re-structure their pedagogic beliefs. This section is particularly significant as the revised TTC course is linked directly to the EL textbook revision and the OTEFL project.

### 6.1.1 Sample schools: selection criteria

In adhering to the ethnographic approach, *context* (see section 5.1.2) automatically assumed key prominence. Hence the criteria I used to choose my samples represented a variety of *contextual features* (educational, social, economic, gender, size, educational ethos, etc) which contributed to creating ‘bounded’ groups that displayed a clear membership of the population (see section 5.3.1 for a discussion on the selection of sites). Thus although generalisability was not the goal of my research, I worked towards a basis for comparison with other classes in other schools by defining clearly the characteristics of the group studied so that they could serve as a basis for comparison with like and unlike groups (Wolcott 1973). As discussed in section 5.2.3, defining constructs or characteristics unambiguously enhances the credibility of the study. And therefore I attempted to adhere to Stenhouse’s (1985a) advice on grouping similar pairs (or threes) of schools along particular dimensions that I rationalised would represent a range of relevant variables in terms of institutions and student populations. The contextual variables representing the sample schools (n=14) are given below.

- a. **Status:** *state school*, or *private but state-aided school*, manifesting a difference in resources (state schools having spacious buildings, large grounds, better resources, and often, trained teachers of English with fairly long teaching experiences.)
- b. **School history:** the older the school, the more acceptable it generally appeared to the public. However, the reputation of the school in terms of SSC results was vital.
- c. **Location:** whether in the *city-centre*, *up-market* or *poorer* areas, which often reflected student catchment zones.
- d. **Size:** *very large* (usually state schools), *large*, *medium*, or *small* in terms of building, resource, student population and teacher population.
- e. **Reputation:** In a highly meritocratic society, school results in the SSC examinations are of utmost importance, particularly in terms of individual students finding a place on the ranking merit list, and the number of students obtaining star marks (75% average marks). These results, publicised by the media, establish the

reputation of schools and staff. From *very good*, *good-average*, *average-poor*, *poor*.

- f. **Student Population:** the *number of students* on enrolment in the whole school.
- g. **Gender of students:** *Mixed*, *girls only*, *boys only*. All state schools are single sex schools, while most private schools are mixed.
- h. **Gender of teachers:** Although boys schools mainly have male teachers and girls schools always have female teachers, mixed schools tended to have more male than female teachers except in the upmarket schools which had more female teachers. The classes I observed were taught by a mix of both male and female teachers.
- i. **Economic background:** The economic status of students is an important variable as secondary education is not free in Bangladesh. As entrance into schools is strictly on merit, children from poorer backgrounds and low literacy families often do not get into the up-market or more reputable schools. From *high-income*, *average-income*, to *low-income* groups.
- j. **Average size of English class:** Although large classes are a norm, words to denote size are used in a relative sense and refer to numbers of students actually present in the class during observation. *Very large* (70+), *large* (55-70), *medium* (40-55), *small* (- 40).
- k. **School ethos:** On a continuum, from *strict* discipline, regularity of attendance and periodic monitoring of progress to a *casual* indifferent existence. Somewhere in the middle I discovered another variety of ethos as practised in the state schools which I term (for lack of a better word) the '*bureaucratic*' ethos. This is manifest by a blend of pompous administrative demands, an apparent strictness in behavioural terms by teachers mixed with a paradoxical apathy in classroom teaching.

Table 6.1 on the next page illustrates the range of variables that represent my sample.

<b>SCHOOLS</b>	<b>Status</b> state semi-state private	<b>School history</b>  Year established	<b>Location</b>  city-centre up-market poorer area	<b>Size</b> v. large large medium small	<b>Reputation</b> v. good good-average average-poor poor	<b>Total student population To class 10</b> (excluding higher secondary enrolment)	<b>Gender of students</b>  mixed girls boys	<b>Economic background</b>  high income average low income	<b>English teachers with teaching qualification</b>  With (+) without (-)	<b>Average size of English class</b>  v large: 70+ large: 55-70 medium: 40-55 small: - 40	<b>School Ethos</b>  strict casual bureaucratic
Site 1*	state	1961	city-centre	v. large	v good	3,200 (2sf)	boys	average	+	70+	bureaucratic
Site 2	state	1965	city-centre	v. large	average-poor	1,735 (2 sf)	boys	average-low	+	70+	bureaucratic
Site 3	private	1955	up-market	large	v good	1,927	mixed	high-average	+ / -	55-70	strict
Site 4*	private	1957	up-market	large	v good	2,750	girls	high-average	+ / -	55-70	strict
Site 5	semi-state	1964	city-centre	large	good-average	1,130	mixed	average	+ / -	55-70	bureaucratic casual
Site 6	semi-state	1982	city-centre	medium	good-average	800	mixed	high-average	-	40-55	strict
Site 7	state	1960	city-centre/ up-market	v. large	good-average	2,000	mixed	high-average	+	55-70	strict
Site 8*	private	1972	city-centre	medium	average-poor	2,300	mixed	average-low	+ / -	55-70	strict
Site 9*	private	1952	up-market	v. large	v good	7,500 (2 sf on 2 sites )	girls	high-average	+ / -	70+	strict
Site 10	state	1963	poorer area	medium	average-poor	1,784	girls	low	-	70+	casual
Site 11	state	1972	poorer area	medium	average-poor	1,200 (2 sf)	boys	low	-	55-70	casual
Site 12	private	1985	poorer area	small	poor	300	mixed	low	-	-40	casual
Site 13	private	1981	city-centre	medium	good-average	575	mixed	low	-	40-55	casual
Site 14	private	1974	poorer area	small	poor	572	mixed	low	-	-40	casual

\* = School involved in OTEFL project, teachers have EL orientation, use revised textbook in class 6.

Sf = school works in 2 shifts (morning and afternoon)

**Table 6.1: Schools in Classroom Observation : Distribution of variables used for selection of sites (n=14)**

### 6.1.2 Teacher profile

Having obtained a wide sample of classrooms in terms of school characteristics, I now focus on teacher characteristics along biographical details regarding training qualification and EL teaching experience in secondary schools. My sample size was 34 (with 9 teachers being observed twice). This information is provided in Tables 6.2. and 6.3.

<i>Teachers with general teacher training qualification</i>	<i>Teachers with English training qualification</i>	<i>Teachers with no training background</i>	<i>Teachers on the OTEFL project</i>
<b>8 (23.5%)</b>	<b>3 (8.8%)</b>	<b>17 (50%)</b>	<b>6 (17.6%)</b>

**Table 6.2: Distribution in terms of training (n=34)**

<i>Years of EL teaching experience</i>	<i>1-5 years</i>	<i>6-10 years</i>	<i>11-15 years</i>	<i>16-20 years</i>	<i>20+ years</i>
<i>Number of Teachers</i>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>

**Table 6.3: EL teaching experience in years (n=34)**

I also requested to see their lesson plans. Of the total of 43 lessons observed, only 14 (32.5%) were preceded by anything written down that could be called some kind of plan. It was more like a list of topics to be covered usually listing activities and page numbers from the course book. No one had what could be called a lesson plan in terms of objectives or stages of lesson and time distribution. When I asked the teachers with no plans (67.5%) how they decided what they would be doing in class, they replied that they had a set syllabus and a textbook which they followed through, page by page. Also the timetable earmarked the classes as being a paper 1 (*English for Today*) or a paper 2 (grammar, translation, or composition) class. Therefore teachers did not see any need for lesson plans. It may be pointed out the ones who had some semblance of a written

scheme were mostly female teachers in sites 3, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 13 and reflected the demands made by the institution rather than any initiative from their side.

I was therefore unable to find out the thinking processes of teachers behind lesson plan construction and what their in-class interactive decision-making justifications were particularly when they departed from their lesson plans (see Johnson 1992, Bailey 1996). Richards and Lockhart (1996: 84) maintain that the ability to make appropriate interactive decisions enable teachers to “assess student responses to teaching and to modify their instruction in order to provide optimal support for learning”. They also assert that teachers who are guided solely by a lesson plan and who ignore the interactional dynamics of the teaching-learning process are less likely to be able to respond to student’s needs.

The lessons I observed were taught by a mix of female (22) and male teachers (21) in Classes 6 to 10, the five years that are included in secondary school cycle. The lessons varied from using the main course book and the reader to teaching grammar, composition, translation and reading. Appendix 6A has a breakdown of class and lesson details while Appendix 6B gives a list of teaching materials used in the lessons.

### **6.1.3 Teachers’ in-class instructional behaviour**

The 43 classes I observed were usually very large and the lesson content varied. I took running field notes which were later developed into prose descriptions (see Appendix 6D for sample field note). The observational field notes of the 43 classes showed a finite set of teachers’ instructional behaviour irrespective of the subject matter of the lesson.

In general the teacher’s personality came over as very powerful in the classroom setting. Older male teachers, particularly in the reputable schools exuded power, authority and awe, and had an almost overpowering effect on students. Their behaviour too tended to be harsh – they spoke loudly, belittled students on learning errors and often drew inferences to deeper faults in their students’ personalities and behaviour. They never smiled. In fact, *affect* (though not *negative affect*) did not play any role in teaching. On the other hand, in classes 6 and 7, young female teachers provided a rather

pleasant atmosphere to the teaching environment. Students in the lower classes appeared to enjoy their lessons but the higher classes presented a sense of paranoia particularly in terms of examination expectations. Shamim's (1993) study of ESL lessons in Pakistan reveals a similar trend in classroom feelings—the junior classes appeared to enjoy English lessons more than the senior classes.

### Lessons on the course book

The classroom language for the majority of the schools was the L1. Only 6 teachers used English comfortably. Several teachers used English but only to exemplify structures being taught. In the case of the course book (see Appendix 4A for an EFT textbook sample), the teacher presented the text by reading aloud, and explained by translating into the L1 (see Appendix 6G, excerpts 3 and 4, where trainee teachers expressed their preference for the same method). Students listened quietly and if they had books, followed the teacher. The teacher sometimes asked rhetorical questions but answered them her/himself. But s/he demanded reassurance by getting the class to repeat a few words after her/him. Some students read aloud parts of the text, one by one, often taking up a major chunk of the class time. Simple pronunciation was dealt with at this point (but students often picked up the teacher's weaknesses too). Then the class was taken through the comprehension exercises. The teacher read the questions aloud, sometimes asking individual students but not giving them enough time to make any real effort to respond. The teacher provided the answer – it was usually the only answer as no alternatives were tolerated, not even re-phrasing (see sample of field notes in Appendix 6D). Also no inferences were allowed – words and statements had to be exactly in the language of the book. In the next lesson, students came prepared and were given test-like items either orally or on the board. The simplified reader was treated in exactly the same manner. Thus teachers *routinised* their instructional actions (Shavelson and Stern 1981). Teaching routines are seen as “a source of relative security and stability” (Prabhu 1992: 235). These routines also tended to narrow down the teachers' repertoire of instructional behaviours (see however, my suggestion for exploiting the phenomenon of *routinisation* in teacher training in section 7.3.1).

### Grammar and composition lessons

These were presented in a similar teacher-guided, top-down provision of knowledge from extremely thick and heavy grammar-translation-composition books. When



presenting a new item, teachers made an extra effort to present rules, loudly repeating them for the benefit of students. More often, exercises were written on the board and students attempted them – always individually. But it was obvious from most lessons that students were expected to go home and memorise the ‘functional-grammar’ books. A letter-writing lesson (site 11) was presented orally with students having been asked to read and memorise model letters for homework. In class, individual students read out the letter aloud in front of the class with the teacher correcting reading mistakes. The overall impression of the English class was one of students “memorising texts and grammar exercises with little or no understanding” (Cullen 1991a: 9).

### Classroom environment

An overall picture of the classroom setting has been provided in section 4.2.2. The data findings on the teaching-learning environment only serves to confirm the strict authoritative ethos of the educational culture where passive students accept finite and inflexible knowledge from the all-knowing teacher (see section 1.3.2). In an average class of 70, although addressing the entire class in general, when it came to task or activity the teacher usually focused attention on a few (“In a class, for instance, there are 8 or 9 bright students – no doubt, teachers pay special attention to them”). There were clearly perceptible ‘action zones’ in the classroom usually towards the front where the ‘more able’ students tended to cluster and towards whom the teacher’s attention was directed. Thus one could recognise whether a learner was *in* or *out* of the action zone (Shamim 1993). This seems part of a strategy worked out by teacher-pupils to cope with features of large classes, physical layout, motivational constraints and possibly diverse learning styles.

Students spoke only when spoken to and except for pair work observed only in two classes students were not encouraged to speak. In fact teachers made extra effort to “silence” (the word teachers generally used) the class. In this context, I would argue that the amount of whispered discussion/sharing of ideas/prompts/non-verbal signalling among learners when presented with a task was tantamount to *covert* group work. Instead of wasting tremendous energy and time in futilely trying to stop this (presently considered a form of “cheating”), teachers could exploit this natural tendency so valued in process approaches to learning. More importantly, it would enable teachers to differentiate between *learning* and *testing*, between *process* and *product*. Having

observed whispered communication as a regular feature in these very large classes, the argument forwarded against large class size being a constraint on group work does not appear valid. Shared learning is part of the culture. In non-classroom encounters too, learners share notes and attend private tuition sessions in groups.

There are overtones of morality in the English lesson. The textbook contents explicitly convey values and norms. Didactic topics are usually chosen as composition tasks e.g. *honesty, obedience, perseverance, good habits* are popular. Also translation texts with moral values are chosen both by teachers and by examiners. Teachers' in-class action too displays this phenomenon. For example, one teacher (site 13) spent more time getting his students to wear little white caps as a mark of respect for Islam. Another teacher (site 5) while doing transformation exercises gave his students a sentence "What a fool you are!" to be changed from an exclamatory to an assertive form which when transformed automatically stood as "You are a fool". As soon as the student said it, the teacher flew into a rage and accused the student of calling the teacher a fool. Suddenly *language in usage* had become *language in use*. He instructed the student to say instead, "I am a fool". The teacher was rather pleased with himself for having pulled off this 'stunt' in front of me—displaying how he educated his students in more ways than one. When I asked him in the follow-up interview his reason for doing this, pointing out that task-wise, the student had transformed the sentence correctly, he confidently replied that he could not allow his students to be disrespectful towards elders. Thus one of the roles of the teacher was seen as an upholder of values. Again, in the case of genuine language error, these teachers sometimes used error correction as an insinuation into deeper faults in learner personalities and behaviour. It is therefore no wonder that students hardly attempt to respond to any queries by the teacher in class.

### Teaching methodology

The methodology is superimposed by the classical educational ethos that favours a 'pint pot' approach (see section 1.3.2). Huq (1988), Cullen (1991a) and Shrubsall (1992, 1993) maintain that the underlying assumption in English learning is that language is a code made up of structures and thus teachers value the knowledge of language rules over the ability to use them. My observation data only confirmed this. The learning of the language is equated with the learning of the code. The most

common student activity is grammar-based work mostly transformation exercises which are memorised as content and not as a tool for using the language, followed by translation of sentences and very short texts. The textbook passages are also treated as content and therefore are never used to develop language skills i.e. language is not treated as functional or interactional, or as a vehicle for communication although the curriculum explicitly defines it as such. In short, the kind of English that is being taught and learned in schools in spite of the curriculum commitments, is unfocused and is little more than what Coffey (1978 cited in Rogers 1982) calls EFNPP (English for no particular purpose) except perhaps for the purpose of passing examinations. Homework almost never played a part in lessons, perhaps because of constraints on checking such large numbers. Sometimes there was homework but the teacher forgot to ask about it and students half-heartedly reminded him/her halfway through the lesson. In general, the classroom environment amounts to what Tickoo (1990, 1996) describes as an *acquisition-poor environment* (APE).

The classes were always in terms of some book, either the textbook, the grammar-translation-composition book or the simplified reader. With regard to teaching materials, Altbach and Kelley (1988) maintain textbooks have a profound influence on the learning ethos in the developing world (cf. Allwright's 1981 argument that materials are only part of the co-operative management of learning and should not be overemphasised). As in many educational cultures, textbooks carry a unique authority here and contains "knowledge that every pupil has a primary responsibility to master" (Dendrinos 1992: 27). Besides, as Cullen (1991a) points out, books gain more status in the light of teachers' poor command of English and their lack of confidence in using it in the classroom. As a result, EL teachers are bound to the language and the tasks in the course book and may not dare to venture beyond what the book has to offer.

### Classroom management

Classroom management is commonly related to a process of solving the problem of order in classrooms. Order in classrooms is context-specific and held in place by an array of forces. It includes the problems of misbehaviour and of student engagement with task. The teachers' management strategy that I observed pertained to establishing and maintaining a teaching order for the class. Socialised rules, procedures, routines and reprimands all appeared to play a role in sustaining this classroom order. Students

contributed in a substantial way – in their behavioural norms and in their ability to perform according to these established rules of classroom participation. In spite of such large numbers there was hardly any behavioural disorder that needed teacher attention except for the occasional ‘silencing’ of student murmuring. However, classroom management did not appear to include the efficient management of time or the encouragement of student attention and engagement with task. Teachers’ view of classroom management focused on a linear flow of action, particularly the teacher’s action in the class with an obvious disregard for student action.

#### **6.1.4 Teachers’ stimulated recall interviews**

Lynch (1990) maintains that it is essential to look beyond the data as external behaviour in order to work out the beliefs underlying those actions. In working out these beliefs, I rely on participant views and engage them in providing a rationale for their in-class action and decisions. Hence, I focused on ‘critical’ incidents or techniques I perceived as recurring behaviour and asked teachers the reasons for their decisions to act the way they did. This was in order to get a glimpse of the “hidden” side of teaching so that it may increase our understanding of some of the more visible and well-known features of classroom processes, as argued by Jackson in his seminal work in 1968 (see section 2.2.1). I aimed therefore to explore teachers’ activities on their own terms and to uncover the relationships between teachers’ knowledge and beliefs and their instructional behaviour. Moreover, I was also interested to see whether there existed a consensus of justification and what implicit theory of the teaching-learning process was collectively represented by this group of teachers.

The observations provided me with explicit behaviour while the interviews provided implicit perceptions. Through their justifications, teachers were able to talk about teaching as a meaning-making activity. It may be reiterated that a finite set of teaching behaviours were identified in my observations. On speaking to teachers, it was revealed that they tended to justify their actions along four parameters. These related to:

- a. their perceptions of their own role as a teacher
- b. their perceptions of the role of the learner
- c. their perceptions of the subject-matter of the lesson
- d. their perceptions of social factors including the school and the wider society.

### Perceptions of the teacher's role

According to Wright (1987: 7), “role is a complex grouping of factors which combine to produce certain types of social behaviour”. These factors are social and psychological and contribute to perceptions, behavioural actions and expectations by members of a community—in our case, the classroom community. Teachers adopt certain roles and through their behaviour express these roles. The following excerpts are taken from the interviews and embody teachers’ understanding of their role in classroom and in the wider society

*Teaching is giving knowledge – to hand over knowledge*

*Knowledge is a prize possession*

*We have to build the characters of these young people*

*A teacher builds a nation*

*How can a student say to the teacher “You are a great fool” even if it is an example of a structure they are practising- that is disrespect*

*The guardians expect us to be very strict*

### Perceptions of the learners' role

Learners are seen as empty pint-pots and clearly divided into good or bad performers in terms of their cognitive abilities:

*Most of the students are very dull. They are not interested in learning.*

*They come from poor backgrounds, they suffer from malnutrition and they cannot afford private tuition.*

*There are only a few good students and they are the ones who are active in class.*

*Learners must listen to the teacher*

*Learners must be obedient.*

*Learners need to be kept under pressure of work*

*They don't pay attention in class because they have private tutors and notebooks.*

### Perceptions of the subject-matter of the lesson

Teachers' understanding of language and language learning influence their perceptions of the subject-matter. For example, the textbook is always seen as being functional when teachers read aloud and translate the text into the L1, followed by answers provided for the comprehension questions. Language is seen as made up of discrete items and language learning as learning the code. All learning is directed towards passing the examination.

*Students need a lot of grammar.*

*For composition and letter-writing students need to memorise from guidebooks*

*Translation and re-translation is necessary to learn English*

*They need to increase their word stock.*

*You need stories to teach proper English.*

*We read aloud and translate because the students cannot understand otherwise.*

### Perceptions of social factors including the school and the wider society

Teachers are extremely aware of external factors that determine their action. These are usually seen as constraints or difficulties created by the context and the society at large. As a result, teachers perceive themselves as having less flexibility because certain curriculum decisions have already been made.

*The EFT books are too easy. The language is too easy. The exercises are too easy.*

*There are no stories so they are not interesting.*

*Because there is no literature, students don't develop good English.*

*The whole examination system is a problem. We have to teach students how to pass.*

*We have a syllabus and we must complete that. We have no time to think of anything else.*

*We have very large classes – it is difficult to do written work.*

*We can only mark students' written work if they finish quickly.*

*The guardians expect us to be very strict with the students.*

*The 500 question bank is a curse. Students don't listen to us. They just memorize the 500 questions and get 50% of the marks. They don't bother about the rest of the syllabus.*

A content analysis of the interviews shows that teachers' justifications for in-class pedagogic decisions were the following:

- Students need to be given explicit rules about grammar.
- Students are asked to read aloud because only then can they get their pronunciation right.
- The teacher usually picks on the bright students because it is important for the rest of the class to see a model of a good student – others can learn from the good student. Also when bad students read, it is a waste of time –“students don't pay money to come to school to listen to bad models of English”.
- A teacher has to be a guardian of moral and societal values.
- Teachers avoid doing anything that is not in the syllabus like some of the poems and games – these are considered a waste of time as a teacher has to finish the syllabus and prepare students for the examinations.
- A teacher has to do a great deal of test practice during lessons in the higher classes to prepare students for the examinations.
- A teacher tells students to use guidebooks and notebooks because that is the only way to do well in the SSC examinations.

The interview responses indicated that there were a finite set of images and accordingly action plans were typically played out. Teachers were quite clear about why they made certain behavioural decisions in class. What is more, there was a shared understanding of the relationships between teachers' knowledge and beliefs and their instructional behaviour, and hence, there was a consensus in their justifications. Thus an implicit theory of the teaching-learning process was collectively represented by these teachers.

#### **6.1.5 Teachers on the OTEFL project**

I observed 6 teachers on the OTEFL (Orientation of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language) programme linked to the NCTB project for secondary school materials development and the revision of the *English for Today* books for classes 6 to 10. New

communicative ELT books were planned to be gradually introduced into all secondary schools. At the time it was being piloted in 30 schools country-wide. These teachers were part of the pilot phase for the new materials for Classes 6 and 7. They had undergone NCTB run workshops on communicative teaching methodology and had been through an orientation programme to introduce them to the new textbook. The 6 teachers were based in 4 schools which were large and well-established. In fact, 3 of them were highly reputable. Four of teachers had training qualifications so it could be inferred they were among the more capable of the teachers I had observed. In fact, one of the teachers was on the team that was authoring the textbook revision series. Therefore I was interested in these teachers' perceptions of 'the communicative approach' to ELT.

The class observations based on lessons dealing with the course book did not appear much different from the other classes of non-OTEFL teachers I had seen. Teachers mostly read out and explained or translated the contents while students listened passively. The co-author used a public address system to speak constantly for the 40 minutes of the class. Her English was fluent and she was very articulate but she did little else except lecture. Only two teachers (both female) used the guided paired practice that was in the lesson for the day. The students shyly took part in the exercise and spoke in low tones. Obviously they were uncomfortable speaking to each other in front of the teacher. This was a mode of interaction that had always been taboo in class. Students responded only to the teacher, never to one another, at least not overtly. The teacher walked around and monitored the students but did not say anything. The activity itself was a guided structure where the same question was answered by different cues that were provided. Although mechanical in nature, there was some possibility of extending the activity beyond the form it was presented, without too great an imposition on learners' language ability. However, the teacher kept to the exact format of the book.

In follow-up interviews, where I asked focused questions on what they thought of the revised textbook, their orientation programme, the effect that CLT might bring about and how comfortable they felt about adopting the approach, and how they saw the students responding. Here are excerpts from responses from four teachers:

*The books are very good for communicative activities.*



*It's fun to teach if you have done the refresher course and if you follow the teacher's guide but the problem with us is how do we devise a 100-mark question paper for each term exam.*

*Discipline is not a problem as the students are busy doing a lot of pair work*

*Orientation for teachers is essential.*

*Classes 8 , 9, 10 books must be revised or this whole effort will go down the drain... the revision project must continue.*

*Sometimes teachers go on orientation courses but they cannot implement what they learn for various reasons.*

*I want to teach by a modern method but sometimes it is difficult – the class is so big.*

Although there was some positive attitude towards the novelty of the approach, teachers were uncertain about the purpose and the direction of their teaching and how it linked into the wider scheme of affairs. Two of the teachers (male, with long teaching experience and working in a highly reputable state school) were dismissive of the communicative approach. They said:

*It is not always practical to send teachers for training.*

*Sometimes 1 out of 3 teachers teaching the same course undergo training, and we have different sections with different teachers assigned to them being taught in different ways. As a result, there is no co-ordination and anyway the tests remain in the old form.*

*Most teachers don't really follow the instructions in the Teacher's Book*

*This dialogue system is good in theory but bad in practice.*

*You can't learn English just by dialogue-dialogue. You need solid grammar.*

*The lessons are short, the tasks are simple. This is not enough to learn the language well.*

In their opinion, in order to learn English, students needed extensive grammar and translation exercises and literature by “real English people”– “that’s how we learnt and that is the best way to learn English”.

An analysis of the instructional behaviour and the justifications that were provided, even among those who seemed well disposed to the approach, showed that CLT was seen as an innovation and teachers assessed it in terms of the following:

- a. With regard *to the efficiency for covering the syllabus*: Most teachers felt it interfered with their responsibilities (the examination had not changed except for the inclusion of pre-provided objective questions (see section 4.2.3) and they felt they had no time to do all this “dialogue-dialogue” business.
- b. With regard *to the efficacy of learning language* (4 of the 6 put grammar as the first priority for learning a language). The innovation had not enabled them to reconstruct their pedagogical values about language learning.
- c. With regard *to the expectations of others*, all teachers gave a maximum priority to examinations. 3 said the students expected them to teach seriously, and not have fun. That is why they always skipped the fun activities and the poems included at the back of the books because “they were outside the syllabus”. Students particularly in the higher classes wanted examination practice and they would complain if teachers were not serious (An example of implicit student control of the innovation).
- d. With regard to bringing about *undesirable consequences* – although not expressly articulated. There was a covert apprehension especially among the senior male teachers that if the innovation were practised fully, they might “lose face”—a covert fear of losing their reputation as strict disciplinarians.

Thus the teaching approach and the assumptions of the materials designers had failed to make sense i.e. there was a gap between what teachers believed to be the way teaching should be done and the approach being introduced. Within the teachers’ reality, the approach did not make sense and therefore they remained either passive or actively resistant. To them, communicative language teaching meant ‘pair work’ where students practised short pre-determined dialogues, an incongruity in terms of skills as hardly anyone ever *spoke* English in their world. This finding is particularly significant as these teachers from some of the top schools were deliberately included in the pilot project and were being developed as future change-agents. This indicates how important it is for teachers to understand and engage with any process that they are involved in. Furthermore, change in one area has to be supported by co-ordinated

change in parallel areas (e.g. in examinations) and there needs to be an awareness of the gap between expectations, norms and beliefs of all stakeholders affected by the process of change.

#### **6.1.6 A conceptualisation of teachers' operative knowledge**

*Concepts* express generalisations from particulars and impose some sort of meaning on the world. Through them reality is given sense, order and coherence. They are the means by which we are able to come to terms with our experience (Cohen and Manion 1994). Two important points need to be stressed – concepts do not exist independently, and are, in effect, constructed, enabling us to acquire some understanding of the apparent disorder around us. Secondly, they are limited in number and are required to explain an infinite number of phenomena. Based on these two points, I attempt to conceptualise teachers' operative knowledge of ELT which relates to their mental constructs, their knowledge and reasoning. It may be pointed out that the categories of analysis are derived from the teachers' own perceptions, and thus have the potential of being much more psychologically valid than externally imposed constructs (Chaudron 1988).

The data shows that teachers engaged in a finite set of classroom teaching behaviours and attributed almost similar justifications for these behaviours which stemmed from four main variables in the teaching context – teachers' perceptions of their role as teacher, their perceptions of the learner's role, their perceptions of language and learning, and finally, their perceptions of contextual factors and societal expectations. In addition, the subject-matter of the lesson too played a part. Thus teachers attached a particular set of beliefs and values to an instance of classroom behaviour.

The classroom underpins teacher-learner roles. Teachers and learners' adopt certain roles and through their behaviour express these roles. Thus teachers conceptualised their own roles, as identified by Bailey (1996), to be "serving the common good". This role (in the form of duties and obligations) is also seen as bestowed upon them by society at large. In this role, they are the givers of knowledge, the guardians of moral values, the disciplinarian of non-conformist behaviour, and the facilitator towards a good result in the English examination.

It is interesting to note that learners' roles are perceived as passive, dependent and at the receiving end of all the good that the teacher and the materials can provide. Indeed the texts are mediated by teachers strictly under the belief that learners should be spared the pain of making any error. There is no scope for engaging with learner's background knowledge or with any affective experiences. Yet there is an implicit acceptance of learners' influence on teacher action as demanding certain behavioural patterns from the teacher. Thus teachers' understanding of learners' expectations also act as determinants of teacher action, as seen with the OTEFL teachers (see section 6.1.5).

External features such as the examination, the phenomenon of large classes, school pressures, societal expectations are all considered influencing factors. Indeed teachers perceive these contextual features as *constraints* rather than *opportunities* which place them in positions where they see themselves as having little flexibility. The pattern of emphasis in the reasons provided for their in-class actions reflect their view of the constraints in relation to their particular teaching-learning context. Holliday (1994a) and Coleman (1996c), among others, argue for the interpretation of classroom behaviour in its cultural context. The range of instructional behaviours are seen as addressing these problems. The active solutions express pedagogic and personal concerns. In such a scenario, van Lier (1988: 82) speaks of "complex relationships between individual participants, the classroom, and the societal forces that influence it."

Teachers' knowledge is actively related to the world of practice (Elbaz 1983). They use their practical knowledge to express purposes, give shape and meaning to their experiences, and structure social realities. It may be inferred that teachers' perceptions have their roots in experience, previous knowledge and socialisation into the "folkways of teaching" (Buchman 1987 – see section 2.1.1). The immediate effect of teaching is the classroom. The common features of the classroom environment shape common patterns of belief and behaviour in teachers. Imbedded systems like the institution and the larger social context which surround them also wield an influence to create a specific culture of teaching. This culture points to the phenomenon of teachers being directed by a personal implicit theory. This implicit belief system works through a

sense of plausibility (Prabhu 1992, 1995) which do not easily allow for alternatives to take over.

From an epistemological stance, these conceptualisations are concerned with ways individuals construct knowledge and interpret the world and are intimately concerned with individuals' conception of themselves and the world around them. These teachers may be considered to have 'variant' perspectives vis-à-vis standard ELT practices, as a result of differing experience and world views, but nevertheless, from a constructivist approach, these perspectives are valid to the participants and to the setting in which they operate, and hence, need to be recognised as such.

## **6.2 Data collection 2: Trainee-teachers' perceptions of ELT in secondary schools**

During the second phase of my study, I explored the beliefs of trainee-teachers who were undertaking the B.Ed. training course at the Dhaka Teacher Training College. The sample size for the questionnaire response was 29. Next, I interviewed 15 of these respondents – all of these trainees had previous teaching experience in secondary schools.

### **6.2.1 Trainee variables**

The trainee-teachers were doing the English specialisation in the SLTE course. Of the 29 respondents to the questionnaire (11 female and 18 male), 23 were practising teachers between the ages of 25 to 45, mostly from state-aided private schools in towns, rural and urbanised rural areas. Except for 6 of them, all were practising teachers with secondary school teaching experience ranging between 2 to 16 years. Most of them taught relatively large classes. None of them were involved on the OTEFL project and were therefore teaching the old structure-based *English for Today* books. The 15 interviewees (5 female and 10 male) were from among these respondents and were all practising teachers. The trainee variables are presented in Table 6.4.

Age	<u>25-35 years</u> 16		<u>36-45years</u> 5		<u>46+years</u> 0	
Gender	<u>Male</u> 18			<u>Female</u> 11		
Teaching Experience	<u>Nil</u> 6	<u>2-3 years</u> 7	<u>4-6 years</u> 10	<u>12-16 years</u> 6		
OTEFL Training	<u>Yes</u> 1 (two-day training at NCTB)			<u>No</u> 28		
Experience of teaching the revised EFT book	<u>Yes</u> 0			<u>No</u> 29		
Classes taught	<u>Classes 6-7</u> 0	<u>Classes 6-7-8</u> 8	<u>Classes 8-9-10</u> 9	<u>Classes 9-10</u> 6		
Average number of students in teacher's class	<u>40-50 students</u> 3	<u>50-60 students</u> 4	<u>60-75 students</u> 8	<u>75-100 students</u> 7		
Location of school where teacher works	<u>Dhaka city and in outlying area</u> 2			<u>Towns, rural and urbanised rural areas (all private) throughout the country</u> 27		

**Table 6.4: Trainee teachers' profile: distribution of teacher variables.**

### 6.2.2 The questionnaire findings

The aim of the questionnaire was to find out what trainee-teachers' attitudes are towards certain ways of teaching and learning English, particularly from a communicative perspective. The rationale for the communicative orientation to my questionnaire items can be justified by the fact that the assumptions underlying the revised TTC programme were influenced by this approach to ELT, the revision itself being linked to the secondary school English textbook and curriculum revision (OTEFL) project (see section 6.1.5). My aim was to get an overall picture of the group

attitude towards this mode of teaching which was being advocated strongly by the current TTC syllabus.

The 22 statements on the questionnaire are structured around classroom teaching and roughly fall into the following thematic groups:

- a. The role of the teacher in the classroom (items 7,8,13,14,19)
- b. The role of the learner in the learning process (items 1, 6, 18)
- c. The place and importance of grammar (items 2,3,5,15,16)
- d. The quality and quantity of error correction (items 4,15, 17)
- e. Teaching materials and activities (items 20, 21, 22)
- f. Group/pair work (items 9,10,11,12).

It may be pointed out that one or two statements may be seen as overlapping such as item 13 (The teacher cannot monitor what the students are doing during group/pair work and therefore the teacher is not fulfilling his/her responsibilities) which may be subsumed under 'the role of the teacher' or under 'group/pair work'.

An equal number of positive and negative statements in random order were used. The construction of each statement aimed at distinguishing between a respondent holding a favourable attitude and one holding an unfavourable attitude. The grid next to the items consisted of 5 columns (from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' with 'uncertain' in the middle, each with a particular value from 1 to 5) thus indicating how far respondents agreed or disagreed with each item. It was decided that high scores on the scale would imply a favourable attitude. Therefore when analysing the data, favourable statements (consonant with the communicative approach) were scored 5 for 'strongly agree' and 1 for 'strongly disagree'. The scoring was reversed for unfavourable statements with 5 for 'strongly disagree' and 1 for 'strongly agree'. Therefore the highest possible score on any one item would be 145 (all 29 respondents scoring 5 on it) and the lowest 29 (with all respondents scoring 1) with 87 as a 'neutral' score.

It is important to clarify that in the tabulation of the scoring, 'uncertain' responses (score 3) were eliminated from the final score. This was done to overcome the difficulties faced by Likert-type scales in arriving at the mid-point between the two extreme scores particularly when mid-points can be reached by being uncertain or by

holding inconsistent attitudes (Oppenheim1992). I therefore eliminated at least one source of the inconsistency, the 42 responses marked 'uncertain'. To this, I added the 3 responses that had been left blank. I therefore did not take into account 45 out of a total of 928 responses which represented 4.8%. Hence the final scoring reflected 95.2% of the responses. In doing so, I felt I did not affect the data adversely as I was not aiming at individual teachers' attitudes but at attitudes of respondents as a group towards the statements. I also decided to drop one statement, item 14 ("During group/pair activities teachers cannot prevent students from using the mother tongue") which I later concluded was a biased statement suggesting the futility of group/pair work and was thus inconsistent with other statements being made on the same topic. Hence Q14 rating was taken out.

I coded the data in terms of rating scores (from 5-1 as explained above) against each statement allocated for favourable and unfavourable attitudes by individual respondents. The uncertain responses were marked by 'U' and were not taken into account. This is tabulated in Table 6.5. The statements are plotted down the left hand side of the table and the respondents along the top. Each respondent's response is plotted in the grid in numerical terms giving an overview of the data (see next page).



	T 1	T 2	T 3	T 4	T 5	T 6	T 7	T 8	T 9	T 10	T 11	T 12	T 13	T 14	T 15	T 16	T 17	T 18	T 19	T 20	T 21	T 22	T 23	T 24	T 25	T 26	T 27	T 28	T 29
Q1	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5
Q2	1	5	5	2	4	2	1	U	4	4	4	1	4	U	5	4	1	4	2	2	4	1	U	U	2	4	1	5	4
Q3	U	2	4	2	2	4	2	2	1	2	5	4	2	4	2	4	1	2	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	5	2	4	4
Q4	2	2	1	5	2	5	1	U	1	1	4	1	2	4	1	2	1	2	4	4	4	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	U
Q5	5	4	4	1	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	U	5
Q6	U	4	1	5	4	4	2	U	4	4	5	4	1	4	1	2	1	5	5	4	4	4	2	2	4	2	U	4	5
Q7	1	1	2	5	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	4	1	1	2	1	2	4	4	4	2	2	4	1	4	2	1	4
Q8	2	4	1	2	1	U	2	4	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	4	2	1	1	1	1	4	2
Q9	U	5	5	4	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	2	4	4	1	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	2	4	5	5
Q10	2	5	5	2	2	2	◆	4	2	2	5	5	4	5	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	1	2	5	5
Q11	5	4	5	2	4	U	5	5	4	4	5	1	2	4	5	4	5	5	4	4	5	4	4	U	5	1	U	4	5
Q12	U	◆	1	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	5	2	1	5	1	4	1	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	2	4	2	4	5
Q13	1	2	2	U	4	5	4	4	U	4	4	5	5	4	1	4	U	4	4	4	2	4	U	2	4	4	2	2	5
*14	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Q15	2	1	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	2	4	5	4	2	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	U	◆	4	5	4	U	1	5
Q16	4	4	4	4	U	5	5	U	5	4	5	4	5	5	1	4	5	4	5	2	4	4	2	5	4	4	4	4	4
Q17	5	4	5	4	4	2	2	4	4	U	5	1	4	4	5	4	5	2	4	4	4	2	4	5	5	4	U	4	5
Q18	U	5	5	U	4	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	U	4	4	4	4	4	5	U	U	4	2	U	5	5
Q19	4	5	2	2	2	4	2	U	5	5	5	5	2	4	2	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	5	4	U	4	5	5
Q20	5	4	4	4	4	4	5	2	4	5	5	5	5	2	5	4	4	2	4	4	4	2	2	5	2	2	4	4	5
Q21	5	5	4	4	5	5	1	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5
Q22	U	5	1	2	2	5	1	4	2	2	5	U	1	3	1	3	U	5	4	1	4	1	1	1	2	4	5	5	4

U = uncertain

\*Q14 = deleted

◆ = no response

**Table 6.5: Distribution of questionnaire responses from trainee-teachers (n=29) (Q14 scores eliminated)**

The next stage was the data reduction where I tabulated the scores on the statements from most favourable to least favourable. The ratings were calculated in 2 ways. First I coded them with regard to individual trainee's attitudes to all the 22 statements to obtain a quick overall picture of their attitudes in general. This is presented in Table 6.6 below. The highest expected score is 105 and the lowest 21 with a neutral score at 63 (based on 21 items). The results clearly show an overall favourable attitude towards the communicative approach with 20 trainees (69%) scoring high (ranging from 94 to 64) and only 8 (27%) showing a slightly unfavourable attitude with one respondent in the neutral area.

<b>TRAINEE SCORES (FROM HIGHEST TO LOWEST)</b>			
<b><u>Highest 105</u></b>		<b><u>Neutral 63</u></b>	<b><u>Lowest 21</u></b>
94	77	66 (3)	53
92	75	65	50
84	74	64	49
83	72	63 ( <i>neutral</i> )	48
80	71	61(3)	
78 (2)	70 (3)	57	

**Table 6.6: Trainee-teachers' attitudes towards the communicative approach to teaching, with total scores on items from most favoured to least favoured**

Secondly, I tabulated the scores on each statement from most favourable to least favourable with the objective of getting a fuller picture of trainee-teachers' attitudes and beliefs about the various aspects of classroom practice. This is presented in Table 6.7 where scores against each item are shown ranging from the highest to the lowest, with 87 as the neutral point (with 145 as the highest possible and 29 the lowest).

ITEMS	SCORES	ITEMS	SCORES
<i>Q1</i>	137	<i>Q17</i>	96
<i>Q21</i>	132	<i>Q12</i>	94
<i>Q5</i>	124	<i>Q6</i>	87 (neutral)
<i>Q9</i>	117	<i>Q13</i>	86
<i>Q16</i>	108	<i>Q2</i>	76
<i>Q20</i>	106	<i>Q22</i>	72
<i>Q11</i>	105	<i>Q3</i>	71
<i>Q18</i>	103	<i>Q7</i>	64
<i>Q19</i>	102	<i>Q4</i>	60
<i>Q15</i>	101	<i>Q8</i>	48
<i>Q10</i>	98		

**Table 6.7: Trainee-teachers' attitudes towards the communicative approach, with scores showing items from most favoured to least favoured (on a continuum ranging from 145 to 29)**

An overview of the figures show an overall favourable attitude towards the communicative approach with 13 items clearly above the neutral mark. There are 6 items which are slightly below the favourable mark and actually only 1 item (with a score of 48) which can be considered truly within the unfavourable range. This item (Q8 ) interestingly refers to the role of the teacher (this is discussed below). However, an in-depth analysis resulted in some interesting patterns to emerge. I shall discuss them in terms of the thematic groups under which the statements were constructed.

*a. The role of the teacher in the classroom.* Items 7, 8, 13, and 19 dealing with this theme are interestingly scattered on the scoring chart. Whereas only one item, Q19, occupies quite a high place (102) on the favourable range attesting to the possibility that trainees are aware of the variety of roles that a teacher plays in a communicative classroom (besides being a transmitter of knowledge), the other 3 items, Q7, Q8 and Q13 all occupy the unfavourable range.

It has been pointed out that Q8 falls clearly into the unfavourable range (in terms of the communicative approach) i.e. trainees strongly agree that the “the role of the teacher in the classroom is to impart knowledge through translation, explanation and giving examples”. The fact that it scored only 48 from a combined response by 29 trainees means that it was rated at an average of 1.6 each, clearly a very unfavourable attitude in terms of the communicative ethos. Q7 which scored 64 (an average of 2.2), and which believed “the teacher to be an *authority* and *instructor* in the language classroom” again is an unfavourable attitude in terms of the communicative orientation. Finally, Q13 shows that as teachers “cannot monitor what the students are doing during group/ pair work [he/she] is not fulfilling his/her responsibilities”, indicating that the teacher has to be always responsible for learners’ behaviour. However, from the communicative perspective, learners are encouraged to take on responsibilities and need to be allowed to interact in group and pair activities. Thus there is inconsistency in the responses. Whereas the overall picture shows trainees are favourably inclined towards the communicative approach in terms of classroom activity, they are, at the same time, faithful towards the traditional view of the teacher in the classroom as being a transmitter of knowledge and in full control of the teaching-learning process.

b. *The role of the learner in the learning process*

Items 1, 6 and 18 under this theme are placed towards the favourable range. In fact Q1 (students being given the opportunity through participatory activities to engage in spoken interaction without too much attention to grammatical accuracy) scores the highest with a score of 137 (out of a possible 145). All 29 trainees agreed or strongly agreed on this. Q18 too shows a belief in learners doing things with language rather than studying it in a direct or explicit manner. However, the neutral attitude towards Q6 shows the uncertain grasp of the principle underlying learner participation in the learning process. Trainees are not sure whether learners can take on the responsibility of learning as it goes against accepted social norms. Thus the popular notion of the communicative classroom simply as learners indulging in spoken interaction in groups and pairs has not escaped the trainees. Yet they do not appear too clear about the principles and assumptions underlying this approach as is evident from their neutral response to Q6 which challenges traditional learner roles by advocating learner responsibility in learning.

*c. Group and pair work*

Items 9, 10, 11 12 have been presented in terms of the merits and demerits of group and pair work. All the items are clearly within the favourable range. In terms of the statements, trainees agree that group work is “a valuable strategy for learning” and allows learners “to explore problems” and “have control over their own learning”, provides “opportunities for co-operation” and “promotes genuine interaction”. Moreover, negative statements claiming group work is impossible in a large class and takes too long to organise and is therefore a waste of valuable time, too, are duly rejected. Thus trainees appear to support group and pair work in their teaching. Yet their neutral attitude towards Q6 above only shows again the ambiguity of their understanding of the principles underlying group and pair work.

*d. The quality and quantity of error correction*

Items 4, 15 and 17 which focus on error and the manner in which errors are dealt with in the communicative approach receive a mixed reaction. Q15 and 17 are slightly favoured by the group in terms of teachers being tolerant of errors and seeing it as a developmental process. Also appropriacy is seen as being more important than grammatical correctness. However, there is a clear inconsistency in the response to Q4 – “The teacher should correct all the grammatical mistakes students make. If errors are made they will result in imperfect learning”. Trainees agree to this whole-heartedly and on the unfavourable score (to communicative teaching) it rated 60, an average of 2 each. Again the scoring shows an unclear perception in this area.

*e. The place and importance of grammar*

Here too trainees show an inconsistency in their response. They favour quite strongly Q5 (“Grammar should be taught as a means to an end and not as an end in itself”) and Q16 (“Knowledge of the rules of a language does not guarantee ability to use the language”). Paradoxically, however, they also agree with Q2 (“Direct instruction in the rules and terminology of grammar is essential to communicate correctly and effectively”) and Q3 (“Grammatical correctness is the most important criterion by which language performance can be judged”).

f. *Materials and activities.*

Responses to Q20 show trainees strongly believe in indulging in whole class teaching supplemented by some group work. Q21 gets a high rating as teachers exhibit their belief that the textbook alone cannot satisfy all the demands of learning a language but needs to be supplemented with other materials and text. However, I am perplexed with the very next response to Q22 (“Guide books and notebooks are essential for students of English in our schools) – trainees agree with this item (actually considered unfavourable from a negative communicative perspective). Do they link Q 21 and Q22 and understand the supplementary materials (that Q21 refers to) to be the ‘bazaar’ notebooks and guide books that are rampant in the educational culture? If that is the case, there is a clear misunderstanding of the statements and may point towards faulty formulation of the items on my part. In exhibiting dichotomous beliefs, trainees either express a confusion in their perspectives or they genuinely believe in the value of notebooks and guide books. It is my guess that it is probably the latter.

The overall data findings indicate that general ideas associated with the communicative approach (interactive learning, focus on meaning, less emphasis on language code and form, a tolerant attitude towards error and error-correction, and a variety in materials and classroom activities) appear to be well received by this group of trainees. However, a closer analysis shows inconsistency and discrepancies in some of the underlying assumptions perhaps indicating the common phenomenon that terms relating to CLT and the communicative approach are bandied around the ELT curriculum world without a clear understanding of the principles that underlie them (LoCastro 1996).

### **6.2.3 The interview findings**

In the follow up semi-structured interviews, I first obtained biographical details through a structured format (see Appendix 6F for a rough interview schedule). Then I went into a more open mode of speaking. Despite the pre-specified topics I wanted to query, I allowed the interviews to develop like a professional discussion. My first question to all of them was aimed at their attitude towards the English language and whether they felt it should be compulsory on the curriculum. All of them responded positively and with conviction and the two main reasons cited in favour of English was that it was an international language and that it was important in order to get a good job.

My next set of questions were pedagogic (see Appendix 6F), including some which were related to the thematic topics from the questionnaire and its findings. Finally I attempted to elicit trainees' attitudes towards the training course they were currently undertaking (see Appendix 6G for sample excerpts from interview transcripts).

The topics which I pursued related to their perceptions of the following:

- a. Their role as teacher.
- b. The role of the learner.
- c. The English language and language teaching and learning.
- d. Teaching materials and instructional activities.
- e. Some communicative approaches such as the use of group/pair work.
- f. The TTC course they were currently undertaking.

#### Perceptions of teachers' and learners' roles

Trainees' views about both roles of the teacher and of the learner were very similar to those of the first group of teachers and hinged on their perceptions of themselves as duty bound to provide knowledge to students who were seen as weak and unwilling to learn.

*Teachers are like their fathers and mothers. We have to see that they get education. We have to give them knowledge. Teach them virtues...Guardians want us to be very strict and give them tests all the time...*

*There is a problem in seating and we have so many students! Any one...I mean, naturally we ask a bright student. In a class, for instance, there are 8 or 9 bright students. No doubt, teachers pay special attention to them.*

*Our students are dull – they cannot learn English. They are not very attentive.*

*Students readily accept whatever teachers say. They think highly of teachers, more than they do of their parents.*

#### Perceptions of language, language learning, instructional materials and activities

Trainees' justifications for using course books and grammars in traditional ways pointed again to contextual concerns. Classroom management was restricted to a flow of teacher activity in class, and not so much on student engagement with task or with

learning. Learning assessment in class was seen as not possible as classes were too big. Homework was difficult to follow up. The use of the L1 was common in class. There is thus a strong indication that trainees' actions and implicit beliefs were not very different from the collective belief system indicated by the first group of teachers.

*The examinations... the examinations... are very important.*

*In higher classes we only have examination practice – students work from the test papers all the time.*

*The class has only thirty minutes! Textbooks need the whole of this time. We can't do much really...*

*Our method of teaching....I don't mean the Teachers' Training Method ...is explaining every line of the textbook and providing answers to the questions there.*

*I tell the students the meaning, line by line ....then I tell the answers to the questions.*

*Grammar, composition, translation – all these are necessary.*

*Most of them have notebooks. I find them buying notebooks all the time. You know, these notebooks contain answers to questions.*

*We observe the trend of questions of the preceding 4/5 years. Then, leaving aside the questions of the immediate past year, we go through the questions of the previous 4 years, on the assumption that the likely questions will be from among these, and accordingly teach the answers.*

### Perceptions of communicative approaches

With respect to their sense of ambiguity of CLT as revealed in the questionnaire findings, trainees were able clarify that they believed in the approach, but in their own settings, they probably would follow traditional practices due to a whole range of contextual constraints. Their statements about CLT might be what Ur (1996) has called 'espoused' theories i.e. theories which are claimed by people to be true but which have no clear expression in their beliefs or their practice or are even contradicted by their actions.

*You see the questionnaire statements.... They are like what we read in our course – this is what we should do. But the big question remains .....is this possible? How can I have group and pair work in my class ... I have 80 students. I can only teach from the textbook. I have to finish the syllabus or the head teacher will be very angry, also the guardians.*



*Even the students – especially class 9 and 10, they're very conscious about doing very well in the examination. That is why they not only want to do practice but also go for private tuition in the evenings. Everyone wants to score high marks in the examination. So all this communication cannot be done.*

### Perceptions of the TTC course

As regards the TTC English programme, trainees were all praise for the approach and the methodology of the revised syllabus. Some young trainees felt they had benefited and expected good training outcomes, but were sceptical about the transfer value of the “modern methods” to their traditional settings.

*All these modern methods we are learning are interesting but we cannot apply them in our classes.*

*I want to do all these modern methods we have learnt – but we have to finish the syllabus.*

*It is said trainees take their certificate but leave their knowledge inside the gates of the TTC when they complete their course.*

*I didn't know these techniques before...Then I did not have a clear idea, as now about pair work as it is given in the book - how it is done and what its utilities are.*

*This training isn't adequate because a two-year course has been condensed into ten months. This has been causing pressure on us.*

*Maybe we need a separate course in teaching English only*

In addition, the younger group of trainees voiced strong reservations about a factor which they felt was an additional constraint—the high-handedness of senior teachers.

*Even though I have a Master's degree, I am not allowed to teach in the higher classes. Senior teachers have a monopoly.*

*The new teachers with English degrees, or from other departments, are more open. For instance, the new course conducted by the NCTB ... we agreed that the professed system was good .... 'oral preparation' and 'practice'. But those who are traditional, they don't agree with this and want us to retain their method. They too need to do courses of the type you mentioned.*

*The truth is ....they feel, being senior, they know everything and should take the higher classes, and should have priority in every thing. And of course they can get private tuition also which means a lot of money. We*

*teach lower classes so students who are taking the SSC will not come to us although we may be more qualified....*

Furthermore, unlike the older and more experienced teachers who had full confidence in their actions and the justifications they provided for their actions, several in the younger group conveyed some sense of uncertainty and tentativeness for their pedagogic actions and their loyalty towards current approaches that were being favoured.

*I want to use these modern methods but I really don't know how to do it.*

*All the other teachers teach in the old way – they will think I am playing with the students if I do pair work.*

*I think, there is some defect in our system because of which we can't make the students learn. We have been trying but have been failing. Maybe, we are slack. We can't blame the students either: they are young, they will learn whatever you teach them.*

*School teachers...the new entrants...what you call 'modernisation'....are following the language as presented in the textbook but the teachers who joined earlier, the senior teachers.... They say something different ... they say it won't work.*

This tentativeness may be seen as an opportunity that may be exploited advantageously in teacher training programmes.

#### **6.2.4 A conceptualisation of trainee-teachers' operative knowledge**

The above responses show clearly that there is homogeneity between the two groups of teachers in their conceptualisation of their operative knowledge. Overall, the trainees saw their role in the classroom as being that of an authority, a supplier of knowledge, a disciplinarian, and a manager of instructional activities. The learners were seen as being either cognitively strong or weak, in need of guidance and were expected to be attentive and to work hard. The subject-matter was important as the textbook was required to be taught in certain ways (reading aloud, translation and exact answers being provided). Grammar, on the other hand, needed rules (language as 'usage' rather than 'use') and large amounts of structured practice. The most important conceptualisation again was the context which was seen as constraining teachers' actions.

My first set of data allowed me to see how teachers defined and interpreted EL teaching in practice. Now I had more information from my second set of data on trainee-teachers. These two sets of data are complementary and provide some insights on how trainee-teachers despite going through an education programme, make sense of their understanding of the process of EL teaching based on their experience and implicit beliefs. As Clark and Peterson (1986: 287) maintain, “The purpose of research on teachers’ implicit theories is to make explicit and visible the frames of reference through which individual teachers perceive and process information”.

The findings from my study appear to reflect the general picture of ELT provided in sections 1.3.2, 4.2.2, 4.2.3, but I would argue that my results are based on a sound set of research procedures and may be seen as confirming what has been claimed for sometime now. Only a very small amount of empirical work has actually been undertaken in this area (cf. Khan 1995) and the mass of the information is actually based on baseline, feasibility or consultancy studies and reports, as well as a range of publications from secondary data.

### **6.3 Towards an understanding of the perceptions of the two groups**

In keeping with the constructivist orientation, I discuss the results of the two studies by adopting Brian Street’s (1984) *ideological* approach, as opposed to an *autonomous* one. These terminology define attitudes to the role of literacy in every society – “autonomous” signifying identical or analogous function while an “ideological” approach is culturally imbedded and recognises the significance of the socialisation process in the construction of meaning. The latter perspective i.e. an ideological or non-universalist perspective allows us “to explore the proposition that behaviour in the classroom can be explained or interpreted with reference to the society outside the classroom” Coleman (1996:9). For instance, Bangladeshi society which emphasises great respect for the authority of the teacher, mirrors these values in classroom behaviour, whereas a society that values independence and individuality encourages a different classroom etiquette (Widdowson 1987, Breen 1985b, 1991, Holliday 1994b).

The likely determinants of the homogeneity found in teacher behaviour and classroom processes may be attributed to contextual factors and the implicit effects of

socialisation into forming particular mindsets. For example, learners are believed to be “dull”, “lacking brains”, “lazy”, “unmotivated”, “do not want to work at all”, “English is very difficult for them”, “learners from poor homes with illiterate parents are bad students”, “a class has only 7/8 good students”. The rules of classroom practice are brief and the clearly formulated statements justify how to behave in frequently encountered teaching situations. This is reminiscent of Buchman’s (1987) phenomenon of “the folkways of teaching” (see section 2.1.1) which provides the key to the collective common sense nature of existing knowledge among teachers – a knowledge which is intuitive and imitative and is not subjected to analysis or evaluation. According to Elbaz (1983), teachers work intuitively rather than analytically to realise their images of good teaching. A further determinant may be related to the issue of routinisation. As suggested by Shavelson and Stern (1981), there is routinisation in perceptions, and therefore teachers for the most part do not consider a large number of options for action but may consider only one alternative teaching routine as an alternative course of action. Thus implementation of a rule of practice is a simple matter of recognising a situation and remembering the rule of teacher action.

None of the teachers mentioned opportunities or advantages but all of them clearly pointed to sources of difficulties: These were identified as:

- Large classes (but large class research has shown that the difficulties are related not only to size but to other factors as well – see Coleman 1987, Shamim 1993).
- The constraints on time and administrative demands for completing the syllabus.
- The spectre of the examinations.

These contribute to the classroom culture and reflect the immediate educational context and components of the wider culture (van Lier 1988, 1990).

In answer to what a good language learner should do, both trainees and teachers suggested the following in order of priority:

Know all the rules of grammar  
Practice a great deal i.e. do exercises  
Need to be good in studies. Need an alert mind.  
Do some outside reading  
Do translation and re-translation  
Speak the language

The findings show three aspects that are similar to both groups. First, teachers displayed or spoke about a finite set of teaching behaviours and attributed sets of justifications for these behaviours that expressed individual implicit theories. Secondly, there is a relative consistency in the relationship between an instructional action and the justification provided for its use. Thirdly, the justifications are made in terms of *concerns* rather than *opportunities* so that instructional action is presented mostly as solutions to problems faced by teachers in their teaching-learning contexts. These solutions expressed pedagogic concerns which were imbedded in individual implicit theories of teaching-learning, of self and of others. One point, however, needs to be emphasised. Although the practising teachers expressed confidence in their judgement and decision-making, several trainees, particularly the younger group, displayed some elements of uncertainty and tentativeness about their beliefs of in-class actions. As stated earlier, this may have an implication in engaging with belief systems in teacher education and helping trainees to make sense of their actions and their underlying beliefs as they learn to teach.

Thus the data reveal a collective implicit theory shared by this particular group of EL teachers (practising and trainee). In the words of Breen (1991: 231), the data provides a “window into the collective consciousness” of two groups of teachers. Cognition studies support the view that such consciousness has its roots in their constructed knowledge and in their socialised experiences. This knowledge influences teachers’ actions and the meaning they give to these actions.

It must be remembered that there are significant differences in language teaching developments between major cities/ rural towns and villages, between key/non-key schools, between private and state schools. Also there is a wide variation in teacher and teaching quality as there is between learner and learning quality. Therefore we should not expect every classroom to be the same. At the same time, as pointed out by Cortazzi and Jin (1996a), there are clearly centralising tendencies of national syllabuses and examinations and widely used textbooks and notebooks, as well as clear perceptions of a common practice among teachers. My data findings demonstrate that such is the case among these two groups of secondary school EL teachers.

The findings emphasise the cognitive dimensions of EL teachers and provide a particular perspective on teacher development in terms of *implicit beliefs* and *experiential knowledge*. It points towards a reflexive process between personal theory and classroom action and supports the need for teacher education programmes to provide opportunities for trainee-teachers to understand the dynamics of how they think and how they act as they learn to teach.

#### **6.4 Summary and conclusion**

In this chapter, I have provided a descriptive-interpretive account of the culture of teaching within secondary school EL classrooms, what (Cohen and Manion 1994: 233) would call “a particular slice of reality”. I have attempted to explore the subjective world of the teachers in terms of their conceptions of what is salient by investigating teachers in-class instructional behaviour and their own justifications for this behaviour. The study findings indicate that EL teachers hold definite views about teaching and learning which underpin the justifications for their instructional behaviour. I would argue that the kind of perspectives provided by even a limited investigation such as this, offers valuable insights for some of the fundamental assumptions that are needed to be considered in a teacher education programme.

Teachers views, deeply cognitive in nature, are seen as being formulated through a personal and professional understanding of societal norms and contextual factors. The findings thus bear relevance to issues raised in previous chapters related to teacher cognition, socialisation, culture and context and have special significance in terms of teachers’ attitudes towards educational innovation and change. These have implications for SLTE as they seriously question the assumptions traditionally made by teacher education programmes that work through a top-down transfer of knowledge. Instead, the need for SLTE programmes to integrate insights on cognitive dimensions of second language teachers appears in a positive light. My thesis therefore proposes that teacher perspectives need to be recognised and engaged with in language teacher education provisions. Thus, with the current SLTE programme in Bangladesh having been analysed as operating through an applied science approach, the study findings indicate the need for a re-thinking of the assumptions and the framework of the teacher training design.

## CHAPTER 7

### SLTE Revisited

#### 7 Introduction

Although it is generally accepted that there are no well developed theories of professional learning, new concepts nevertheless are emerging that challenge ways of thinking about teaching and teacher education and are providing new insights and helping educators to make informed choices in new directions. My thesis has been an attempt in a similar light. Informed by perspectives from cognitive psychology and teacher socialisation studies, I have shown through my investigation of teachers (practising and trainee) that my hypothesis relating to the significance of teacher beliefs and attitudes informing classroom practices is an operational reality. Yet current practices in teacher education in Bangladesh do not recognise this phenomenon. In this final chapter I put forward arguments towards a reformulation of the framework of the current SLTE programme (analysed in chapter 4). Issues drawn from the review of the literature are integrated with the study findings and linked into my hypothesis of interaction between teachers' implicit beliefs and instructional packages offered on teacher education programmes.

The central aim of my thesis has been the search for principles. I have attempted to pursue, what Widdowson (1990: 61) has described as “theoretical rigour at the service of practical relevance”. A couple of decades ago, Brumfit (1979) emphasised the relevance of principles to teacher education in the following manner:

No practical problems are ever solved without recourse to principles of some kind. If they are unstated, the risk is that they will be unexamined. In the end, teacher training must be about the principles for teaching rather than what to do in particular circumstances, for no two sets of circumstances are the same and there are few rules for all occasions... . This suggests that the best teacher training course must therefore be based on principles rather than on practice.”  
(Brumfit 1979: 2)

## 7.1 Looking back

In this section I will synthesise my thesis under the themes identified on two fronts. The first involves theories and issues that have been drawn from a survey of the literature on the teacher, particularly the second language teacher and on language teacher education. This was undertaken in chapters 2 and 3. The second reviews the findings of my study, both documentary and empirical, carried out in chapters 4 and 6 and partly too in chapter 1, and also includes a critique in term of the limitations of the study with suggestions for further research.

### 7.1.1 A review of relevant issues

Bangladesh, like many other developing countries, operates within its own specific set of circumstances and therefore my concern has been to look for theories and issues which could form the basis for an approach to teacher development here. This was the overarching purpose of my literature search in chapters 2 and 3. The issues identified related broadly to psychological and contextual features, as well as to aspects of the ‘theory-practice’ and the ‘training-education’ interface in SLTE. These provide a theoretical basis for my argument of promoting a cognitively and contextually oriented approach to EL teacher development. These are briefly recapped below.

#### Theories from cognitive psychology

Theories of *connectionism* and *constructivism* (see section 2.1.3) state that knowledge is constructed rather than stored and learning involves continuous active construction, connection and reconstruction of experiences. This has contributed to the *theory of cognition*. Research on teacher cognition, investigating different aspects of teacher thinking and teacher knowledge have revealed evidence that the nature of this construction of knowledge depends on prior experiences and existing knowledge. A further reconceptualisation views cognition as being at an intersection between the mind and the context thus establishing a relationship between context and cognitive performance (see section 2.2.1). Applied to teacher education, this *theory of cognition* has strengthened the assumption that student teachers construct knowledge based on their prior experiences and learning. This highlights the cognitive demands placed on teachers and supports the need for SLTE programmes to provide opportunities for



trainee-teachers to understand the dynamics of how they think and act as they learn to teach.

The Vygotskian *theory of socio-cultural learning* (see section 2.1.3) where learning is seen not as an individual process but as occurring through instruction and social interaction in a participatory framework has reinforced the concept of collaborative learning. Developmental and cognitive psychology have further urged the importance of emotional support when promoting complex thinking. This has had a considerable effect on collaborative approaches in the classroom reinforced by the *humanistic* perspective (see section 2.1.4) and a *process-before-product* orientation. A knock-on effect on teacher education supports practices that facilitate analysis, reflection and collaboration.

### SLA theory

Some principles in SLA theory (see section 3.2.3), although formulated in terms of language acquisition, may be seen as providing insights towards practices in SLTE. The concepts of *input*, *noticing*, and *comprehending* have implications for training. For example, the element of *noticing* is important in reflection and analysis as modes of promoting a deeper understanding. Significant, too, is the concept of an interface between *explicit* and *implicit* knowledge and underlying this, the element of *consciousness* in learning. This insight from language learning has a similar validity for devising appropriate methodologies in teacher education. Woodward (1991), for example, draws parallels between learners and trainees and between language classrooms and training classrooms, and suggests using EFL activity frames appropriate for trainees with suitable input.

### Teacher socialisation studies

A spin-off from the theory of cognition and the significance of context on knowledge construction has spawned studies on teacher socialisation which suggest that teachers are influenced by “the apprenticeship of observation” and a body of practice based on intuition and common sense on the one hand, and by tradition and socialisation, on the other (see section 2.1.1). The implications for teacher education point to training being rendered ineffective as trainees adhere to prior socialised knowledge and once back in their classrooms, continue to follow familiar patterns of teaching. In relating this

socialisation feature to SLTE, I have suggested that the “the apprenticeship of observation” may be seen in a renewed light. This is evident from the practice of using classroom data (transcripts, videos of lessons, diaries) or the observation of actual classrooms as input in training courses. Used propitiously, ‘observation’ during training can be used as a valuable tool to activate the reflexive nature between teachers’ theories and curriculum expectations.

### Issues of context and culture

These have overcome the positivist approach to the universalist theory of learning and teaching, and have ushered in the naturalist-constructivist orientation to the multiple realities of knowledge (see section 5.2). Such perceptions have prompted ethnographic approaches to explore teacher and learner classroom behaviour from the standpoint of societal and ideological beliefs. This has resulted in a recognition of differing educational ideologies, and has led to concerns over the appropriacy of approaches to curriculum design. This view is crucial for developing appropriate SLTE in developing countries.

### Theories of innovation and change

The recognition of contextual and cultural differences have led to an ethnographic stance with a recognition of cultural mismatches when curricular notions formulated in one setting are transferred to non-compatible settings. A more recent development is the *diffusion-of-innovations* perspective which views innovation as a social process, and not just as a technical matter. The diffusionist perspective advocates a ‘bottom up’ participatory approach drawing teachers into the change process by working with teachers’ attitudes and belief systems. As Munby (1983) cautions, teachers’ implicit theories may be ignored only at the innovator’s peril. The diffusionist and ethnographic perspective is crucial for developing an ecologically appropriate SLTE programme.

### The issue of the non-native speaker teacher of English in developing contexts

The literature generally focuses on redressing the injustices done to non-native speaker teachers by the hitherto preferential treatment of native-speaker teachers in ELT, and thus plays up the non-native speaker teachers’ pedagogic competence, experiential knowledge of second language learning and insider knowledge of local environments. However, this issue is irrelevant in Bangladesh as EL teachers are all non-native

speakers. My concern is that secondary school teachers have very poor English language skills and for the purposes of SLTE, I propose a strong component to deal with language development.

#### Theories of teacher education: conditioning vs. cognitive views

The distinction between the conditioning and the cognitive views of teacher education have given rise to a tension between normative and analytic practices in SLTE. These have led to a divide between the applied science tradition in which teachers are viewed as consumers of theory, and the more recent constructivist tradition where teachers are accredited with knowledgeable, autonomous roles with their knowledge (or beliefs) being formed in terms of experiential and contextual orientations. The current constructivist trend favours theory and practice co-habiting in a complementary relationship. The implications for SLTE point towards enabling beginning and practising teachers to develop an enhanced ability to mediate between theory and practice. This is obviously linked to the cognitive dimensions in teacher development.

Concomitant with the theory-practice link is the notion of ‘training’ versus ‘education’, the former characterised by approaches towards preparing teachers with atomistic techniques and skills, and the latter through a holistic perspective towards enquiry, interpretation and mediation. The educational perspective allows an active theory-practice interface and enhances prospects of continued professional growth. It also takes on board the notion of teacher as ‘action researcher’. Based on these theories, models of SLTE range from a top-down transmissive scheme of craft knowledge through strong and weak forms of applied science models to a reflective or mediational approach to teacher education. Although it is recognised that the latter models are desirable in principle, I have argued (*passim*) that a realistic approach to the setting in Bangladesh would demand a reformulation of any given model to suit conditions of relevance there.

#### **7.1.2 A review of the study findings**

Here I provide a brief review of the study findings, both documentary (from chapter 4) and empirical (from chapter 6). In the first I undertook a theoretical analysis of the

current SLTE course offered at the TTCs. In the second I explored the belief systems of two sets of teachers in secondary schools in relation to their in-class behaviour.

In relation to the documentary analysis undertaken along theoretical and contextual parameters, the SLTE course is found to be an innovation with respect to the previous programme in terms of its principles and approach. The previous course adhered to a narrow applied science model where authoritative educators transmitted pedagogic knowledge to passive trainees. The revised course has assimilated some of the more currently approved concepts in teacher education (see section 4.3.1).

However, as no curriculum decision is value-neutral, the programme developers display a tension in their proposals as they struggle to maintain a balance between two opposing educational ideologies (traditional and progressive). As a result, the programme displays a process-oriented approach but is linked in a somewhat covert manner to product-oriented aims and objectives. In this sense it can be seen as a compromise model, a kind of a 'broad' applied science model of SLTE. It is also argued that such an ambiguous approach has its own dynamics that may be considered valid, given the circumstances.

Two aspects of this model are worth noting. First, *experiential knowledge* and *practice* are not overtly exploited. Thus the *principle of reciprocity* in the reflective process (as advocated in the reflective model, see section 3.4.3) is absent. This is unfortunate as most trainee-teachers have past teaching experience. Secondly, there is hardly any recognition of trainees' *existing conceptual schemata* or mental constructs (which I have variously called ideas, beliefs, perspectives, attitudes). This hampers the possibility of trainees engaging with and making sense of the course input in terms of their previously held mental constructs. These two aspects are developed further in section 7.2.2 where I reconceptualise the current SLTE framework in terms of my thesis.

Turning next to my empirical study, I present an overview of the findings in order to link them to my present discussion. The study explored aspects of teacher thinking in relation to perceived teacher instructional behaviour in secondary EL classes with two

groups of teachers, the first group commenting on immediate in-class action, the second group (trainees) using introspective perceptions of prior teaching experience.

The findings show three aspects that are similar to both groups. First, teachers identified a finite set of teaching behaviours and attributed sets of justifications for these behaviours that expressed their implicit theories. Secondly, there is a relative consistency in the relationship between an instructional action and the justification provided for its use. Thirdly, the justifications are made in terms of *concerns* rather than *opportunities* so that instructional action is presented mostly as solutions to problems faced by teachers in their teaching-learning contexts. Their solutions expressed pedagogic concerns which were imbedded in individual implicit theories of the teaching-learning process. However, although the practising teachers expressed confidence in their judgement and decision-making, some of the trainees, particularly the younger group, displayed elements of uncertainty and tentativeness about their in-class decisions.

Thus the data reveal a collective implicit theory shared by this particular group of EL teachers (practising and trainee). Cognition studies support the view that such consciousness has its roots in their constructed knowledge and in their socialised experiences. This knowledge influences teachers' actions and the meaning they give to these actions. The findings from the studies provide a particular perspective on teacher development in terms of *implicit beliefs* and *experiential knowledge*. It points towards a reflexive process between personal theory and classroom action and supports the need for teacher education programmes to provide opportunities for trainee-teachers to understand the dynamics of how they think and how they act as they learn to teach.

### **7.1.3 Limitations of the study**

In line with the aim and purpose of my research, the focus of my study has been more conceptual than empirical. I have explored theoretical trends, issues and underpinnings of teacher education both in the field of mainstream education and in second language pedagogy. From this I have formulated a theoretical framework around which I have developed my thesis. Within this conceptual perspective, I have undertaken an analysis

of the SLTE programme in Bangladesh. I claim to have done justice to this conceptual investigation.

In relation to the empirical study, the purpose and relevance of the enquiry to my thesis cannot be denied. Nevertheless, there may be some limitations. With teacher perceptions as my chief point of reference, I was operating in a difficult area. It is accepted that behaviours do not give clear-cut indications of modes of thinking, and in that sense my categorisation of classroom behaviours may be questioned. However, as these behavioural patterns have not been used to attest to any form of learning outcomes, and since these have been used as springboards for teachers to talk introspectively about their beliefs and decision-making processes in class, I believe that my analysis is likely to be acceptable.

The sample schools are restricted to the city, although perspectives of teachers from rural areas in more disadvantaged settings may have provided a further array of thought processes. This is likely, notwithstanding the careful consideration given to secure a wide range of variables in my multi-site collective case study as discussed in sections 5.3.1 and 6.1.1. Indeed, in the case of trainee-teachers, out of 29 who responded to my questionnaires, only one was from the capital city while the rest were from different kinds of schools from all over the country, many of them from rural areas. Again, of the 15 who were interviewed, all of them came from different backgrounds of teaching and from various parts of the country, so the limitation may be not be very significant.

Again it has not been possible to undertake a longitudinal study – perhaps a richer interpretation of classroom processes and teacher perspectives might have emerged from such an enquiry. Moreover, the fact that teachers lacked a metalanguage to articulate their perspectives and theories about teaching and learning may have obscured some of their deeper perceptions and interpretations. This limitation is all the more reason to encourage teachers to engage with and clarify their beliefs and perceptions during the training stage.

I have constantly reiterated that classroom processes are complex multiply-constructed realities and therefore the perspectives of other stakeholders in the school and the wider community would be desirable, particularly those of learners who share the classroom

experience. I have explained in section 5.3.4 why I was unable to include students in the study. Again, as my principal focus is the SLTE course, the perspectives of trainers would have been useful. In this respect, there is a definite limitation.

These therefore render any generalisations tentative. As I have pointed out earlier, it is not generalisations I am after, but a basis for comparability across two groups of teachers and for drawing a link to assumptions in teacher education. As Guba and Lincoln (1994) have advocated, the criteria for judging inquiries conducted within the constructivist paradigm are trustworthiness and authenticity, and these may be evaluated in terms of the design, approach and methodology I have applied. My study, in essence, is exploratory and the results I have forwarded are not definitive – they seek to indicate trends in teacher thinking and the meanings teachers make of instructional behaviour, but the real significance lies in their implications for teacher education practices. Nevertheless, the limitations of my study may be seen as offering signposts for further research.

#### **7.1.4 Directions for future research**

The signposts for future research, in terms of the focus of my study, point in two directions. One is in the sphere of ‘learning to teach’, and the other is the investigation of kinds of teachers’ knowledge and beliefs and how teachers give meaning to these beliefs through their action.

Research into teachers learning to teach English both during training and during the first few years of their professional lives would provide interesting findings. Studies into novice teachers’ learning processes during training and a longitudinal study of trainee’s development of knowledge about teaching EL may be traced in three phases. The first phase explores the basic assumptions about language, language learning and language teaching that trainees bring with them to the course, together with their perspectives on the nature of effective teaching. The second and main phase studies how these initial theories change (or do not change) during the course and during their practice and supervisory sessions. The final stage carries the observation into trainee teachers’ classroom practices to investigate how these ‘newly formulated’ ideas are reflected. Such research, besides using conventional data collecting procedures, need to

focus on insider perspectives and therefore may use introspective tools such as recorded think-aloud protocols, journal-keeping or diary-writing. Insights from such studies would strengthen the congruence between teacher development course assumptions and trainees' own conceptualisations and understanding.

The second area is the need for a continued exploration of the cognitive dimensions of second language teaching. With curriculum reform and change being seen as a necessity in ELT, a clearly important area for investigation is teachers' own conceptualisations of teaching and learning. Teachers' conceptualisations have a crucial function within curriculum change as even minor changes, such as a revised textbook, challenge teachers' established concerns. Curriculum change requires an accommodation of new elements within teachers' personal belief systems. Breen (1991) contends, a reflexive process between personal theory and classroom action is at the heart of curriculum implementation. Therefore uncovering the nature of teacher knowledge and beliefs and the manner in which teachers give meaning to these beliefs through their instructional action will provide insights into the kind of support that can be provided for teachers. My study has been only a small step in this direction. An obvious requirement is to widen the scope of studying teacher beliefs at all instructional levels. Understanding the language teacher is not merely perceiving what the teacher does in a lesson. To understand fully, it is necessary to listen to the multiplicity of meanings created by the people who undertake teaching and learning.

## **7.2 Looking ahead**

In this section I develop my thesis by referring to recent investigation on teacher beliefs which support the principle of integrating cognitive dimensions into teacher education programmes. Links are drawn to provisions in teacher education and it is argued that trainee teachers need to be supported through opportunities that help them to understand the way they think and act. Finally, I present a conceptual reformulation of the current model of SLTE in Bangladesh, hinting at parallel issues that need to be considered.



### 7.2.1 Moving the boundaries of EL teacher beliefs

Human knowledge is a compound of that which we receive through impressions, and that which the faculty of cognition supplies from itself.  
(Immanuel Kant 1934: 25)

Theories of cognition have established that beliefs influence all human perception and the ways in which events are understood and acted upon (Nisbett and Ross 1980). Within this perspective, teacher beliefs in educational research are thought to have a filtering effect on all aspects of teachers' thoughts, judgements and decisions (Munby 1982, Clark and Peterson 1986, Nespor 1987, Pajares 1992, Tillema 1994). Indeed, Pajares (1992: 329) maintains *belief* may be "the single most important construct in educational research".

Essentially, further research is needed. Drawing on cognitive psychology and educational research, Pajares (1992) points to some fundamental assumptions that research into teacher cognition needs to work with. These involve the acceptance that beliefs are formed early in life through a process of cultural transmission and help to shape the way people construct an understanding of themselves and the world. Belief systems thus play a critical role in shaping perception and behaviour. Teachers' beliefs are characterised as a belief substructure which do not operate in isolation but are interrelated to all other beliefs. Therefore, by the time prospective teachers enter training college, their beliefs are well formed and are extremely resistant to change. These beliefs are seen as complex and difficult to unpack, and what is more, they have a filtering effect on thinking and information processing. Such beliefs have their roots in early experiences as students, to use Lortie's (1975) classic phrase, during "the apprenticeship of observation". Although this experience can help student-teachers to make sense of classroom experience, it is nevertheless a one-sided view.

Based on these assumptions, it is important that educational research, teacher education and teacher educators recognise clearly the phenomenon of teacher beliefs. Recent studies on teacher preparation programmes attest to the fact that teacher beliefs about their roles and about teaching remain largely unchanged during training (Clark and Peterson 1986, McLaughlin 1991, Calderhead and Robson 1991, Johnson 1994). As pointed out earlier (section 2.2.1), research into the cognitive dimensions of *second*

*language* teachers' thoughts, judgements and decisions is still very new (Freeman 1989, Richards and Nunan 1990, Almarza 1992, Johnson 1992), but already there are indications that beliefs play a prominent role in instructional behaviour in second language classrooms.

The call for a second language *teaching* theory (as opposed to a *learning* theory) based on classroom research (Larsen-Freeman 1990) is leading to research findings that emphasise the significance of teacher belief and decision-making in ESL (Lynch 1990, Brown 1990, Yen 1993, Richards 1993, Almarza 1996). Johnson (1994) suggests that the unique nature of *second language* teaching requires an added dimension to the research needs of second language teacher cognition. She maintains explorations are needed to establish insights into "the unique filter" (Johnson 1994: 440) through which practising second language teachers make instructional decisions and select certain instructional practices over others, and through which trainee-teachers conceptualise their initial teaching experiences, interpret new information about second language learning and teaching and translate this information into classroom practices. These explorations are particularly essential if SLTE programmes are to integrate insights about cognitive dimensions of second language teachers and teaching. It is unfortunate that research into *non-native* second language teachers' beliefs and attitudes in *developing* contexts is practically non-existent.

As in any area of concern, voices of caution have been raised. Kagan (1990) has expressed some scepticism about the nature of teacher cognition studies which has taken off in a big way in recent years, particularly in mainstream education. She states that the notion of teacher cognition may simply be "too big" for mundane application, and critiques some of the approaches to the evaluation of teacher cognition, pointing to ambiguities and paradoxes inherent in the literature, especially the continued use of rhetoric associated with process-product research. Kagan suggests that it might be politically exigent to begin relating measures of teacher cognition to valued student outcomes. However, I find Kagan's criticism not entirely valid. Simply because a notion is felt to be crucially important in education does not warrant scepticism about its importance, especially when principled reasoning justifies its validity. As for questions of rigour in research enquiry, this is a universal issue that is applicable to all areas of research and therefore should not be singled out in the study of teacher

cognition alone. And finally, that teacher cognition should be related to student outcomes is stating the obvious – all educational enquiry has as its ultimate focus the nature of student outcomes. However, to suggest that “measures” of teacher cognition should be related to “valued” student outcomes appears to me to go full circle back into process-product studies. Such a suggestion seems to trivialise a notion that is certainly “big” (though not “too big”) in current educational thinking.

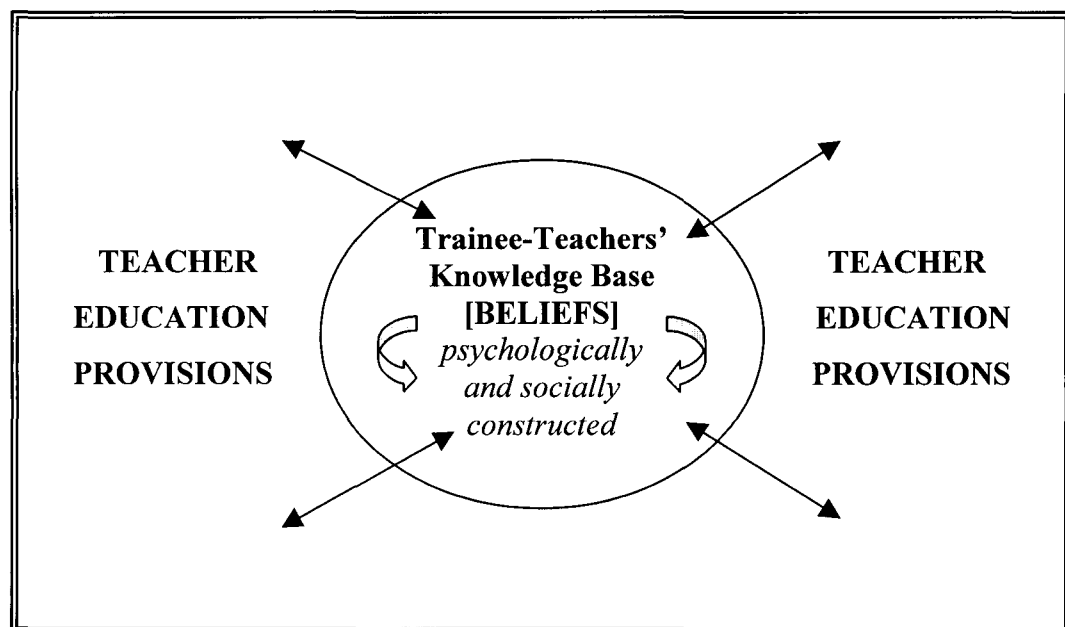
Finally, although it is indicated that beliefs are complex psychological constructs and are difficult to unpack and engage with, it may be argued that the task is not impossible given some of the evidence from cognitive psychology itself. For example, Wagner (1991) and Sternburg and Wagner (1994) speak of beliefs as *norms* and *imperatives*. Individuals follow norms and evaluate their own and others’ actions through these norms. While norms can be negotiated, imperatives are binding obligations. Wagner (1991) explains how *knots* emerge when individuals hold imperatives which are incompatible with reality or with other imperatives. In educational endeavours, particularly in the case of innovations which are perceived to be distant from teachers’ own reality, the formation of psychological *knots* make the innovation unsuccessful. What developers need to do is to disentangle these knots by tracing them to their norms and inhibit the transformation of norms to imperatives, since imperatives are difficult to change. Thus Wagner (1991) proposes that structural and psychological resistance need to be tackled with an approach that allows teachers to go deep into their schemas and norms and disentangle their imperatives. This clearly provides insights into the manner in which teachers’ prior mental constructs may be addressed.

Additional insights from cognitive psychology speak of multiple ‘knowledges’ constructed rather than stored, and learning which involves continuous active construction, connection and reconstruction of experiences within personalised contexts. Guba and Lincoln (1994) claim that these multiple constructions are subject to continuous revision with changes likely to occur when relatively different constructions are brought into juxtaposition in a dialectical context. The ‘*dialectical context*’ is what I am proposing through supportive practices in SLTE programmes.

Finally, a justification is forwarded from the standpoint of context and culture. I have adopted an *ideological approach* as opposed to an *autonomous* one (Street 1984),

which allows us to recognise and understand the complexities of given settings with reference to the wider society. This stance is culturally imbedded and recognises the significance of the socialization process in the construction of meaning. However, merely adopting an ideological perspective as *an end in itself*, in order to understand cultures of learning (particularly exotic ones) is self-defeating. It leads towards a deterministic sense of relativism. I would argue that too strong a commitment to relativism may actually hinder rather than propagate understanding (see Popper 1994). As Brumfit (1996) maintains, a more moderate view recognises that individuals, in spite of being members of interlocking social systems, nevertheless wield a sense of order even in their diversity. Furthermore, sociologists such as Murphy (1986) maintain that cultures are by no means static entities but are prone to change, constantly feeding on influences from other cultures. In the light of the discussion here, the other cultures can be seen as embodied through the input and practices within well-informed teacher education course designs.

The centrality of trainee-teacher beliefs and the imperative to engage with them in the design of a teacher education course is schematically represented in figure 7.1.



**Figure 7.1: The place of implicit beliefs in a teacher education programme.**

### 7.2.2 Reflective practices in SLTE

The focus on teacher beliefs and the need to integrate them in teacher education has singled out *reflection* as a prominent activity to be undertaken by trainees. In fact *reflective teaching* by practitioners is increasingly being seen as a positive step forward (Scrivener 1994, Richards and Lockhart 1996, Richards 1998, Wallace 1998). According to Calderhead (1989, 1992), *reflective teaching* has become a widely used term and the concept needs to be further examined in the light of empirical research on teaching and on how teachers learn to teach.

The growth of interest in *reflection* by teachers in their professional activities and in teacher education may be traced to a variety of sources which have been identified in previous discussions. These are: the dissatisfaction with the fragmentation of knowledge by process-product research, the increasing dominance of cognitivism over behaviourism, and the recognition of empowerment for teachers. Elements of this phenomenon have been repeatedly encountered in Schön's reflection-in-action concept (passim), in the enquiry-oriented approach (section 3.2.3), Wallace's reflective model (section 3.4.3), Widdowson's model of mediation (section 3.4.4), and, last but not the least, in the concept of classroom-centred action research (section 2.2.4).

*Reflection* is seen variously as analysis, interactive reflection or retrospective reflection. Munby and Russell (1993) also suggest terms such as 'analytic-thought', 'deliberation' or 'enquiry-oriented' practice. The assumption in this practice is that there is an active engagement with some input or issue, and then an analysis or deliberation along certain terms of reference with the purpose of reaching an informed decision. There is a principle of reciprocity in the *reflective* process, what Breen (1991) calls "the reflexive process". In teacher education circles, the potential for reflection has gained support. It has been established (sections 2.2.1, 7.1.1) that teacher beliefs not only have a filtering effect on thinking and information processing, but are also complex and difficult to unpack. Reflective practice offers opportunities for reciprocity between beliefs, experiential knowledge, practice and received knowledge. If practised meaningfully, it has a strong possibility to allow engaging with beliefs, promoting cognitive processes and enhancing the ability to make informed choices. Additionally, it strikes a positive

chord with current appeals for teachers to develop themselves beyond the temporal bounds of a teacher education course.

However, questions have been raised as to the nature and composition of *reflection*. Valli (1992) maintains that reflective teacher education does not exist in any coherent manner. Munby and Russell (1993) state that there is often an ambiguity on whether reflection is a conceptualisation or a technique.<sup>34</sup> They feel that “reflection might be an appealing term around which well-intentioned developments in teacher education programs might be articulated” (Munby and Russell 1993: 432). This may be an issue for debate among academics on an epistemological plane but for an educational setting like Bangladesh, such questions appear surrealistic. I believe, given the circumstances, that teacher education in this context would take a great leap forward if it could encourage trainees to adopt even reflective *techniques* that have the potential subsequently to lead on to conceptualisation.

As mentioned earlier, Calderhead (1989, 1992) cautions that the efficiency of reflection is in doubt with *novice* teachers, as they generally interact at a fairly superficial level. He advocates that reflective practices may be addressed more usefully 10-15 years into a career, thus offering a case for promoting regular in-service courses. In the case of SLTE in Bangladesh, as most trainees are practising teachers it may be argued that reflective practices could be used profitably in initial training as well.

Despite the general support for reflective practices in teacher education, there is a need for research into current ideas of reflection, and an insight into how reflection and analysis might usefully figure in the task of learning to teach. Meanwhile it can hardly be denied that teacher education needs to integrate reflective practices in order to promote trainee teachers to adopt a reflexive orientation between their implicit knowledge base, their contextual setting and the received knowledge that they are exposed to.

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<sup>34</sup> In chapter 4, I have stated that the sort of *reflection* envisaged in the current SLTE course in Bangladesh is actually *a technique* and differs from the way Wallace (1991) has presented it.

### 7.3 Re-thinking SLTE for secondary school teachers in Bangladesh

This thesis has looked at EL teaching in secondary schools from teachers' psychological and ecological contexts. It has drawn on teacher socialisation studies which view pre-teaching learning experiences as an important contribution to teacher thinking and implicit beliefs. It has also drawn on insights from research on teacher thinking and teacher knowledge and on the process of reflective teaching as a tool for trainees and teachers. Vicariously it has worked on assumptions from cognitive psychology and concepts of learning processes from SLA research. It has also been argued that it is difficult to understand what teachers do in the classroom if we lack an understanding of the psychological and the social contexts. This leads on to a realisation that teacher education is involved with issues that are more complex than are recognised in standard teacher education programmes.

An examination of teacher education models has shown training programmes (particularly those that are variations on the more standard approaches to the *applied science model of professional development*) do not integrate cognitive dimensions, and therefore do little to engage with teachers experiential theories and perspectives. It has been noted that teachers' implicit beliefs and knowledge are rich, diverse and complex and differ significantly from the kind of knowledge presented during training courses. It also needs to be recognised that not only does this implicit knowledge base wield a filtering effect on information processing, but the nature of this knowledge, too, does not lend itself to an easy engagement with the linear prescriptive mode followed in most courses. This would indicate that teacher preparation courses have little effect.

What now emerges is that an informed theoretical framework is required to underpin an appropriate model of SLTE. An organising set of principles and assumptions were drawn up in chapter 3 (see section 3.4.5). Here I attempt a reinterpretation of the current approach to teacher education in Bangladesh on the basis of the arguments I have developed. As it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that teacher education programmes need to be built on psychological and contextual bases, I shall use these as the main thrust of my framework.

The current SLTE programme in Bangladesh follows a broad applied science model (see section 4.3.3) and adopts a mixed process-product oriented approach with some trainee-involvement through discussion and ‘reflection’.<sup>35</sup> However, despite paying lip-service to the idea of reflection, the model does not truly exploit trainees’ prior experiential knowledge and more importantly, there is no apparent recognition of trainees’ mental constructs that constitute their existing beliefs. Thus the curriculum developers have shown scant awareness of trainees’ psychological contexts. On the other hand, there is some attention to the ecological context evident from the dilution of certain theoretical constructs in the curriculum document where attempts are made to cater to traditional preferences of instructional behaviour.

### 7.3.1 A reconceptualised model of SLTE

In attempting a reconceptualisation of a training design for SLTE, I adopt a *dialectic perspective* to reframe traditional and progressive viewpoints. Kramsch (1993) describes “dialectic” as a dialogue between two opposed or contradictory viewpoints – not to oppose or contradict – but to understand each other’s positions from a broader and less partial viewpoint. This does justice to the substance of each point of view and also allows a search for a common ground. In the course of this search, understanding between the two viewpoints may emerge, based on a recognition of differences and an acceptance of a continued dialogue despite these differences. It leads to “embracing conflict” rather than “achieving consensus” (Kramsch 1995: 6). Through this dialectic perspective, I attempt to redraw the boundaries of SLTE in the light of my findings and the arguments I have developed. I work with two differing ideologies, the traditional classical humanist ethos within which education and the society at large are immersed, and a number of progressivist principles which I have argued are necessary for teacher education. I have thus *appropriated* notions from recognised wisdom and used them to suit conditions of relevance in Bangladesh.<sup>36</sup> The result is a compromise SLTE model or a variation of the “cultural synergy model” proposed by Jin and Cortazzi (1998).

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<sup>35</sup> The term ‘reflection’ is used rather loosely and not in the sense indicated by Schön’s (1983) ‘reflection-in-action’ in terms of an exercise of interactive, interpretive skill, and more recently applied by Wallace (1991) in his ‘reflective model of teacher education’ – see section 3.4.3.

<sup>36</sup> The notion of *appropriation* has been used in the context of acquiring another culture (and language) while retaining one’s own. This term too has been used by Kramsch (1998).



Furthermore, I consider teacher education itself as an example of *innovation* in educational practice on the grounds that trainee-teachers are basically asked to change their preferred ways of thinking and acting. Therefore, in addition to the dialectic orientation, I adopt the *diffusionist perspective* as well (as advocated in the diffusion-of-innovations literature – see sections 2.1.7, 4.3.3). Of course, both these perspectives work on parallel principles.

However, before proceeding further, I emphasise three aspects:

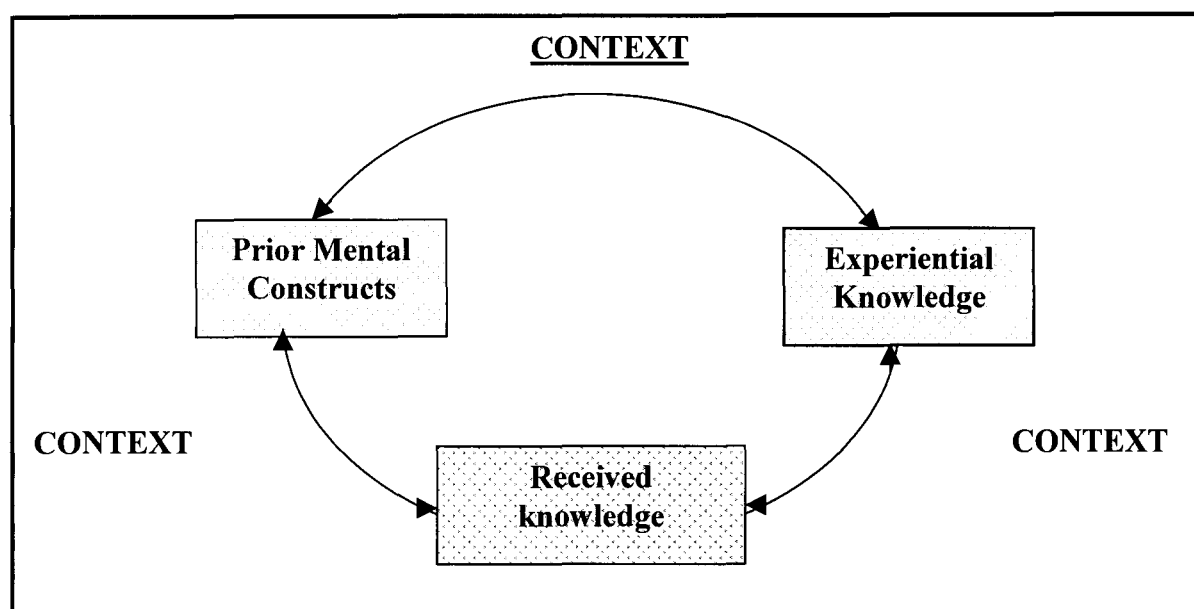
First, there is a distinct place for *knowledge input* from received wisdom which so often forms the course content of most SLTE courses. This has been argued convincingly by Widdowson (1990), Wallace (1991), Johnson (1994), Ur (1996) and many others. Indeed, input from linguistics (though de-emphasised) is important too, otherwise teachers are cut off from meaningful conceptual frameworks (Tyler and Lardiere 1996). However, it is in the manner of the interaction with this received knowledge trainees can “make sense” (Johnson 1996a) that is crucial in any programme.

Second, the norms and expectations of a classical humanist educational ideology of trainees and trainers have to be recognised and therefore I argue for an “incremental approach” towards trainee autonomy (as advocated by Prabhu 1987 and Britten 1988) which is seen as progression from a lower to a higher level.

Third, I argue for explicitness and overt understanding of purposes and objectives of training activities. Wallace (1991) has advised teacher education courses to be explicit about establishing the relationship between academic information and practice and to guide trainees through this process. Woodward (1991) has emphasised making things overt so as to establish connections which she calls “loop input”—“like painting two colours so that they interact to enhance each other” (Woodward 1991: 16). Scrivener (1994) proposes a 5-step approach to foster overtness in the training process.

In the light of my arguments, the main constructs in an SLTE programme that I emphasise are trainees’ *mental schemata* and *experiential knowledge* and the significance of *societal norms* and *contextual features* and how these interact with the

received input from applied knowledge. These may be schematically represented as in Figure 7.2 on the next page.



**Figure 7.2: The major constructs for an SLTE programme**

Within this framework of constructs, the most important task facing teacher educators is to find ways of engaging with trainees' mental schemata, beliefs and attitudes and subsequently to bridge the gap between these pre-existing beliefs and the new information that is offered. Tillema (1994) calls this the "congruence hypothesis". Bridging this gap between teacher cognition and training manifests theoretical assumptions made by the training design about the process of knowledge acquisition and restructuring. The training approach therefore needs to work on two planes. First, it needs to be underpinned by a clear theoretical understanding of the manner in which knowledge is seen to be constructed. Second, it utilises specific design solutions in which trainees' cognitive dimensions are engaged with and linked to the knowledge input i.e. theoretical knowledge. What is being sought, then, is an integration of theory with practice. The *theory-practice* interface is seen as a major issue in teacher education (see chapter 3 *passim*) and underlies the very notion of the *educative* principles of a holistic approach that provides teachers with versatile and adaptable abilities to relate to their own contexts of teaching (see the holistic concept of *education* versus the atomistic, skills-based orientation of *training* in section 3.3).

The theoretical assumptions underlying my model have already been clarified in terms of the cognitive and constructivist orientations of knowledge processes which uphold the relationship of existing and prior knowledge to make sense of new information. The constructivist approach describes learning in terms of building connections between prior knowledge and new ideas and claims that effective training helps trainees to construct an organised set of concepts that relates old and new ideas. Therefore what is needed is to help trainees to transfer their *declarative knowledge* into *procedural knowledge* or as Johnson (1996a) states, assist in the development of their *perceptual knowledge*.

Teacher educators ... must create opportunities for novice teachers to explore, develop, and refine their perceptual knowledge; to uncover what they are actually aware of; to articulate the particulars of their own classroom context; to examine their own reactions, thoughts and feelings; and to account for the intricacies of their own teaching.  
(Johnson 1996a: 766)

Teacher educators need to be aware that theory does not always inform practice, since many problems that arise are generally not caused by teacher's lack of theoretical knowledge. Instead the problems teachers face are often caused by constraints imposed on them by social, cultural, educational and economic contexts (Johnson 1996a). This is illustrated by my study findings where teachers justified instructional actions by referring to phenomena which were perceived as "concerns" or constraints imposed by the setting. This being the case, one cannot always be sure that theory will always inform practice.

The relevance of theory to practice therefore depends on the extent to which teachers themselves make sense of that theory (Tillema 1994, Lamb 1995, Johnson 1996a, Richards 1998). The focus therefore is for teacher education programmes to structure their courses in ways that foster the sense-making process, and thus help to demystify theory in the minds of teachers. Based on these arguments, I now present some principles that are seen as essential to the design of a teacher education course in order to make a meaningful link between teacher beliefs, experience and received knowledge.

First, input needs be related to *the familiar context of teachers' own teaching*. This is what Freeman (1994) advocates as recognising the situated and interpretive nature of

teaching. When input links into teachers' own experiences, it helps to bring to the surface teachers' implicit beliefs and engage with teachers' justifications for instructional behaviour. In allowing teachers to articulate their justifications for why they teach the way they do and in allowing them to talk about their justifications with others, they engage in *reflection on theory*, however naive or ill-formed they may be. By thus being immersed in the familiar context of their teaching, trainees are enabled to foster this sense-making process. In so doing they are made aware of the strength or frailty of their justifications. In such a situation, SLTE programmes cannot rely on the transmission of knowledge model and needs to take recourse to a more problem-oriented or *case-based method* as advocated by Shulman (1992).

Case-based methods provide rich descriptions of complexities of teachers' work by revealing complex variables as trainees sort out, make sense of and justify the use of particular actions. Johnson (1996a) maintains cases, unlike real classrooms, provide a safe environment for trainee-teachers to consider alternatives granting them time and space to consider all issues within a teaching situation. Moreover, they can be used as social activities to promote working in groups in order to discuss, reflect and analyse. She further suggests that trainee-teachers may even "author" cases as a means of talking about what they know within the contexts of their own experience. This is particularly significant in the Bangladeshi context where such collaborative activities are not normally nurtured. Such activities have been used not only with case studies but also in the form of video/audio recordings of lessons and lesson transcripts, by several EFL teacher educators notably Ramani (1987), Jarvis and Taylor (1990), Cullen (1991b, 1995), Yin (1994) and Borg (1998). Ramani (1987: 5) argues "teachers' theoretical abilities can be engaged and strengthened if their intuitions are accorded value and if the entry point is close to their experience as practising teachers".

Second, besides recognising the situated and interpretive nature of the teaching context, educators must also recognise that learning to teach also involves *the social practices of teaching and learning*, and this is where a fundamental weakness is detected in the current SLTE course. Trainees at present do not participate in teaching while they study about teaching. Thus they do not have first-hand experience of the situated and interpretive nature of real teaching. Like most teacher education courses the last-term practice teaching is inadequate (see section 4.3.1.4) not only in its time-tabling but in

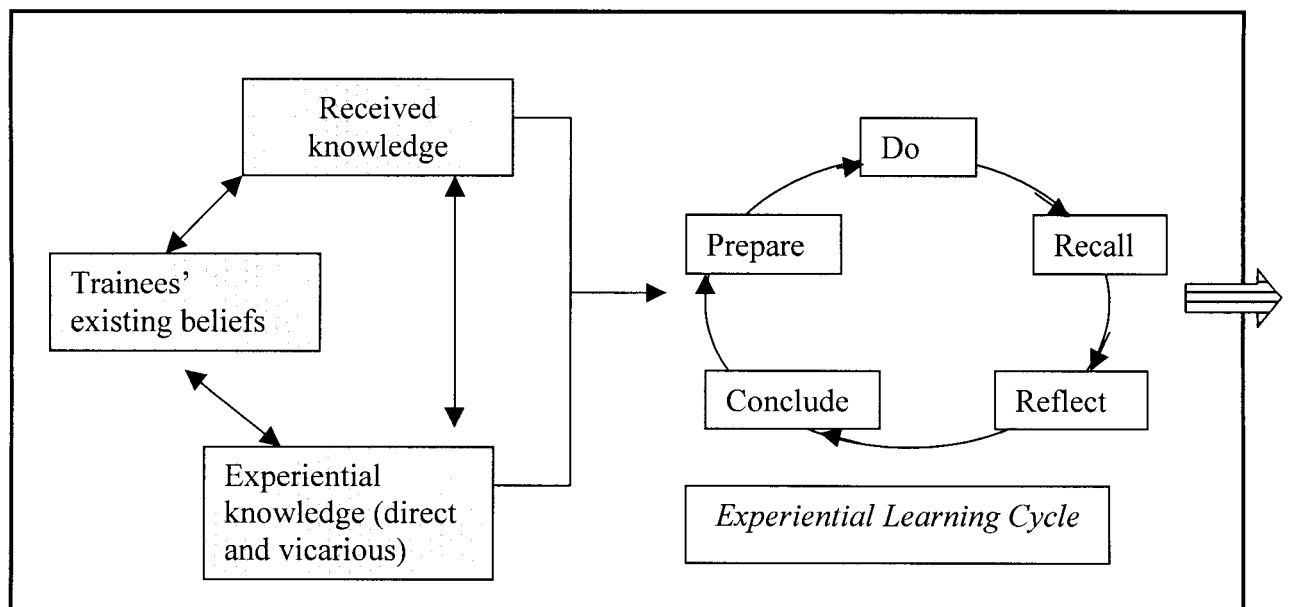
the manner of its undertaking as well. Johnson (1996b) advocates that the one semester practicum is grossly inadequate for preparing new teachers to teach. What is proposed then is the formation of “professional development schools” to provide an authentic environment for the preparation of teachers (Gebhard 1994, Johnson 1996a). These are seen as places where trainees enter as novices and are gradually socialised into the school culture through an incremental process by class observation, team-teaching, peer observation, developing lesson plans, participating in team-meetings, preparing case studies. Thus professional development schools have the potential of creating an environment where reflection and continuous enquiry becomes the norm. Wallace and Woolgar (1991), Wright (1992) and Moon (1994) offer ideas on collaborative approaches with such schools and the use of in-site teachers as mentors in developing contexts. Wright (1992) proposes a “classroom studies” module which draws upon the notion of action research through a collaborative approach.

It may be pointed out that the Dhaka TTC has a state school attached to it which has been planned as a ‘laboratory school’ for trainee-teachers but the quality of mentoring and supervision is unsatisfactory here. Therefore what is needed is a partnership between college educators and site-based teachers who may act as mentors and share the responsibility for preparing teacher trainers in a meaningful way. Obviously ways need to be devised to make this partnership profitable and meaningful for the professional development school as well.

Third, in a classical humanist set-up, a post-graduate course without serious *knowledge input* in the form of lectures would be downgraded to mere farce. Therefore, lecture-based sessions need to have their rightful place in the course. It has been accepted that received wisdom is necessary in the form of readings and lectures. However, in keeping with the ethos of reflection and analysis, it is proposed that knowledge input be integrated with tasks and activities so as to encourage the situated and interpretive ways of relating knowledge to experience and beliefs. For example, Medgyes and Malderez (1996: 52) propose a problem-solving approach to applied linguistics lectures in Hungary where “the authentic classroom concerns of our students became the entry points into the theories and findings offered by applied linguistics research”. Moreover, instead of a linear presentation, I propose a cyclical slotting of lectures in order to link them to case-based studies and trainees’ on-course teaching experience.

Finally, *the issue of assessment* may be raised. The current SLTE course has written examinations, two terminal and one final, where trainees are expected more often to regurgitate received knowledge within a limited time slot (see Appendices 4E and 4F for sample of test papers). They are also assessed on a one-off practice teaching session by a supervisor who may not be an EL trainer (see section 4.3.1.4). The assessment procedure obviously needs to reflect the nature of the situated and interpretive ways of relating to teaching and participating in teaching that has been proposed. Collins (1991) proposes a *portfolio assessment*. Johnson (1996a) advocates making explicit the specific purpose that the portfolio will be used for, so that trainee teachers need to compile evidence to successfully meet the purposes such as a paper written for a course, field notes of classroom observation, teaching artefacts, journal entries on particular students, reports by a mentor, etc. The process thus requires trainees to articulate their knowledge about teaching in ways that are similar to the ways they are going to use their knowledge in actual teaching. Other possibilities are in the form of papers and projects. For example, Wallace (1996) describes a professional project as a major form of assessment on a B.Ed. course in Malaysia.

The model of SLTE that I have presented is conceptualised in Figure 7.3 below.



**Figure 7.3: A reconceptualised model of SLTE**

Unlike Wallace's model which places trainees' existing schemata in a stage one phase, I have placed beliefs or schemata right within the model to be interacted with throughout, including the 'experiential learning cycle'. The experiential learning cycle or what Wallace calls 'the reflective cycle' is borrowed from Scrivener (1994) who presents the process of learning in 5 steps: doing something – recalling what happened – reflecting on that – drawing conclusions – using conclusions to inform and prepare for future practical experiences. Like Wallace's model, the continuing arrow on the right indicates that professional competence is a continuous process of development. The teacher trainer's role is seen as providing information, guidance, support, counselling, instruction, demonstration, examples and feedback and, in general, being a catalyst in the learning-to-teach process.

Finally, I propose including three things which is essential within the specific setting of Bangladesh. The first is *a language improvement component* which has been argued for previously. Without an acceptable level of EL competence, teachers cannot be expected to perform effectively in class despite the training they receive. The second is *the training of simple atomistic skills of teaching and classroom management*, including the effective use of the blackboard and the efficient use of time. The third is recognising *the element of routinisation* that is favoured by the traditional work culture in Bangladesh. Mascarenhas (1993) has explained success in South Asian rural development to the importance of routine. I would argue for extending this statement to teacher action in SLTE. In pedagogy, teacher instructional behaviour is seen as routines – indeed innovations that do not bridge the gap into teachers' belief systems are often routinised into familiar forms (Prabhu 1992). Although routinisation goes against the idea of autonomy and creativity that is being proposed through progressive approaches, just as the "apprenticeship of observation" has been revived in a dynamic form, routinisation may similarly be used to advantage. The element of reflection, analysis and interpretation may be used with such regularity that this practice becomes routinised in the trainee's repertoire.

### **7.3.2 The challenges to consider**

Challenges are natural to any endeavour and therefore they are discussed not as constraints but as features that we need to recognise in the overall scheme of affairs.

The major factors that need attention may be seen as occurring within the teacher education programme itself, while others are placed within the larger framework of the educational setting. These are:

- a. The de-linking of English from the rest of the school curriculum is an imperative. At present the English curriculum and the mode of assessment in secondary schools is similar to that of Bengali, the vernacular. This traditional approach needs to be carefully re-examined and English needs to be released from the severe demands of the present curriculum to be able to function in its role as an international language.
- b. This leads on to the issue of a re-assessment of school examination procedures. Presently the tests are norm-referenced. What is needed is a skills-based approach that reflects language in use. The negative backwash effect of tests has been discussed at length. We need to reverse the scenario by creating an atmosphere of a positive backwash effect. Kellaghan and Greany (1992) reports the use of examinations to improve education in several African countries.
- c. The administrative structuring of teacher training colleges need to be reformulated. They have to be delinked from the general colleges and placed under the faculty of education to facilitate both pre- and in-service developments in teacher education, and, in particular, to avoid trainers being transferred out, as at present.
- d. Attention is automatically drawn to trainers or educators themselves and the need for a well-informed cadre of trainers with their own belief systems compatible with the assumptions of the programme. Kennedy (1993) advocates meeting the needs of trainers. Krasnick (1986) maintains trainers themselves need to change the “images of ELT” and incorporate a social science perspective towards the training process.
- e. The issue of supervision, mentored teaching and the practicum needs a thorough revision in the light of the principles of the approach that is being presented. At present, practice teaching and the quality of supervision is sadly inadequate. This negates the basic principle of the reflexive interaction between experiential knowledge, practice and mental constructs on which the SLTE programme is designed. There are ample suggestions in the literature to help develop a credible



system of supervision and practice teaching, for example, Gebhard (1990a, 1990b, 1991), Gaies and Bowers (1990), Wallace (1991), Wilkin and Sankey (1994), Johnson (1996b), Richards (1998), Flowerdew (1999) among others.

- f. A word of caution is raised by Breen et al (1989: 126) who state, “There is a significant gap between what teachers think and do together in workshops, and what an individual teacher thinks and does in the classroom”. Teachers tend to deter adoption of practices so that there is a risk that only less innovative ideas find their way into the classroom. In other cases, ideas are adapted in a way teachers think is appropriate for their circumstances, the appropriacy not always being altruistic. The innovation literature advocates it is important for participants to have a stake in the innovation they are expected to adopt. In terms of incentive, teachers should be able to perceive some sort of ‘reward’ for changing their instructional behaviour. Therefore, getting teachers to question their standard practice within the reflective process does not necessarily guarantee that trainees will alter their beliefs. Not only ways of integrating the reflective procedure have to be cultivated in the experiential learning cycle of an SLTE programme but more importantly, conditions around teachers’ professional and private lives need to be favourably developed in order for teachers to appreciate the benefits of accepting change.
- g. A final caveat: In a society like Bangladesh which is heavily constrained by a classical-humanist ideology in education and an inflexible, norm-based, hierarchical culture within society (including all the subcultures starting from families, schools, work places right through to the top echelons of government), I would hazard a guess that implicit beliefs and thought processes function strongly among Bangladeshis at every level. Since there is a general absence of a democratic process through which differences are articulated or tolerated or engaged with or even addressed, people nurture their inner beliefs and often end up working with elaborate hidden agendas guided by their inner belief systems. In such a scenario, the reflexive process that is envisaged by the SLTE model I have proposed, needs sensitive handling and extra perseverance to make it an effective tool in order to foster the “sense-making process” among trainees.

## 7.4 Concluding remarks

It is a principal argument of this thesis that adequate second language teacher education is a powerful instrument for addressing the wide-ranging maladies afflicting ELT in the school curriculum. Having developed my thesis from psychological and ecological perspectives, I have emphasised the importance of cognition and context in understanding the phenomenon of teachers' construction of knowledge and their interpretation of the world around them in order to address the situated and interpretive nature of teaching. Within the SLTE course design, I have emphasised the centrality of trainee-teachers' beliefs and an interaction with these beliefs in order to enable them to make sense of the training process, and to foster links between theory and practice.

I would further suggest that just as I have argued for trainers to accept and work with trainee perspectives and characteristics, so too should trainee teachers through an appropriate teacher education programme, on entering the classroom, be able to extend similar loyalties to their students and *their* characteristics. This would allow teachers to dispel deep-rooted prejudices about learners. Such a conceptual shift can only be seen as empowering the EL teacher with a renewed sense of professional responsibility.

At the same time it needs to be recognised that new approaches introduced solely into teacher education curriculum and training is unlikely to be sustained if it is not underpinned by parallel developments in English teaching pedagogy within the secondary school system. It is encouraging that the recently started ELTIP programme has identified textbook and examination reform as the key planks of change at the level of attitudes and practice for EL secondary school teachers and has taken up a country-wide plan of action along this line. It is hoped that these reforms will weave into teacher education programmes in a meaningful way and be sustained through a supportive infrastructure over the long term—a long range investment in a total system rather than a one-shot arrangement. The EL teacher training provision system needs to take into account all elements of a total instruction package.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasise that the main purpose of my study has been, in the words of Hargreaves and Fullan (1992:4), “to generate critical conversations with the wisdom and expertise of current practice”. In the process, I have attempted to apply

a macro perspective to a micro reality. In this connection, I return to Widdowson's statement which I used in the introduction to this thesis:

The influence of ideas...depends upon them being recast in different terms to suit other conditions of relevance.... so that they key in with one's frame of reference.  
Widdowson (1989: 128)

It is hoped that this study has been able to achieve this "recasting" of ideas in terms of the framework I have formulated, and has been able to key in to the specific setting under consideration. In the process, I hope I have been able to offer some conceptual tools to teacher educators to enable them to rise to the challenge of English language teacher education for secondary schools in Bangladesh. My thesis, therefore, is offered as a small contribution to a much larger sphere of principled enquiry and as such, can have no conclusion. It can only merit a place among the countless segments that together form the on-going collage of educational research and investigation.

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- D Now write a short description of your partner's house like the description of Sabina's house. Begin like this :

(Name)'s ..... house is .....

## Lesson 2

### Shahanara Begum's Daily Routine

- A Read the passage.

Shahanara Begum gets up early every day. Then she collects the drinking water from the village tubewell. Next she cooks the breakfast and washes the dirty clothes. Then she sweeps the floors and keeps the house and yard clean. After that she feeds the chickens and does the shopping.

- B Take it in turns to ask and answer questions about Shahanara's daily routine like this :

- A What does Shahanara do first every day ?  
 B She gets up early. What does she do then ?  
 A Then she collects the drinking water from the village tubewell. What does she do next ?

- C Now use the pictures to talk about Sabina's routine.



- D Now use the pictures to *write* about Sabina's daily routine. Start like this :

Sabina gets up early every day. Then .....

## Lesson 3

### My Daily Routine

- A Read and act out the dialogue :

- A What do you do every day at home before you come to school ?  
 B Well, I wake up at six o'clock and roll up my mat.  
 A Then what do you do ?  
 B I wash myself, brush my teeth and put on my clothes.  
 A What do you do after that ?  
 B Then I have my breakfast.  
 A What do you have ?  
 B Oh, I eat some rotis with vegetable curry and drink tea.  
 A What do you do next ?  
 B Then I come to school.

- B Now talk to your partner about her/his daily routine in the same way.

- C Now write a paragraph about what your partner does every day before she/he comes to school. Use these words to join your sentences :

Then      After that      Next  
 Begin like this :

(Name) ..... wakes up every morning and .....

## **APPENDIX 4B**

### **Objectives of the B.Ed.syllabus (old)**

#### **ENGLISH (ELECTIVE)**

##### **1. Objective:**

The main purpose of English special method is to prepare teachers of English for our secondary level. Main objectives for this are the following:

- (i) To help the trainees assess the need for and use of English in Bangladesh and to enable them to study the actual English teaching situation and suggest remedial measures.
- (ii) To improve the general English proficiency of the trainees, so that they can effectively teach the subject at this level.
- (iii) To help the trainees acquire skills in the modern methods and techniques of teaching English according to the secondary school syllabus.
- (iv) To guide the teacher-trainees in preparing annual schemes of work and daily lesson plans for use in the classroom.

##### **2. Content Area**

###### **Unit 1: Teaching and Language**

- a) Nature and Functions of Language and Principles of Language Learning
- b) Stages of Language Development
- c) Role of English as a second/foreign language in Bangladesh
- d) Aims and objectives of teaching English in the schools of Bangladesh
- e) First, Second/Foreign language

###### **Unit 2: English in the New Curriculum**

- a) Place of English in the new school curriculum
- b) The present state of English teaching in our schools: drawbacks, suggested measures for improvement
- c) The new English textbooks: salient features and development of contents: Book III to VII

###### **Unit 3: Development of General English of the trainees**

- a) Basic structures of English as included in the secondary school textbooks, with special reference to:
  - (i) Phrases and clauses
  - (ii) Voice

- (iii) Verbs: transitive, intransitive, causative
- (iv) Participles: Present and Past
- b) Development of speech through dialogues and debates
- c) Development of writing (paragraphs and composition)
- d) Development of pronunciation: the sound system of English - IPA; accent and intonation; British and American English

#### Unit 4: Developing the Language Skills

- a) The listening and speaking skills: oral exercises, group and pair work etc.
- b) The reading skills - types - development exercises
- c) The writing skills - types - development exercises
- d) Pronunciation - accent and intonation

#### Unit 5: Methods of Teaching

- a) The Grammar-Translation method
- b) The Direct Method
- c) The Structural Approach
- d) Innovations: The Audio-lingual method, the Communicative Approach, the Eclectic Approach.
- f) Teaching Aids - preparation and use

#### Unit 6: Teaching Specific Areas

- a) Teaching of Grammar
- b) Teaching of Composition - Paragraphs, Essays, Guided and Free composition
- c) Teaching of Poems
- d) Testing of English - Essay and objective-type tests, short and broad questions

Unit 7: Preparing annual schemes and daily lesson plans - prose, poetry, grammar and composition.

#### PRACTICALS

- a) Tutorials
- b) Writing of Lesson - Notes
- c) Review of textbooks

### **3. Teaching Aids:**

The following will be relevant as teaching aids for the English class:  
Pictures, models, books and magazines, charts and diagrams, flannel board.

#### 4. Teaching Techniques:

The emphasis should be on active learning and on the involvement of trainees in developing their own personal teaching styles. Lecturing should be minimised. Instead there should be individual and group assignments, discussions, and preparation and observation of lessons taught by trainees either to their peers or to school students (micro-teaching).

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## APPENDIX 4C

### Revised B. ED (English Elective) Syllabus

#### **1. Objectives:**

The purpose of the B. Ed. English Elective course is to prepare teachers of English for our secondary level. The general aims of the course are as follows:

- i) To improve the general English proficiency of the trainees.
- ii) To increase the trainees' awareness of the need for and use of English in Bangladesh, and the place of English in the secondary school curriculum.
- iii) To equip the trainees with the necessary skills for teaching English as a foreign language in Bangladesh, by:
  - a) developing their understanding of the key principles of English language learning and teaching with specific reference to English as a foreign language;
  - b) by helping the trainees make effective classroom use of the secondary-school textbooks and any supporting materials;
  - c) by enabling the trainees to plan appropriate terminal/annual schemes of work and to prepare effective lesson plans.
  - d) by developing their ability to set appropriate tests in English and to evaluate the day-to-day progress of their students.
- iv) To provide a basis for the continued professional growth of the trainees once the course is over, by developing their self-awareness as teachers of English and by stimulating their interest in the field of language teaching.

#### **2. Content Area:**

##### **Unit 1: Language Improvement P. 1**

- a) Review of tenses: Present, Past and Future.
- b) Active and Passive Voice: form and use.
- c) Modal Verbs.
- d) Language Functions: Requests and Offers.
- e) Articles.

##### **Unit 2: General Considerations in teaching English in Bangladesh P. 24**

- a) Aims and objectives of teaching English in schools in Bangladesh: English as a foreign/international language.
- b) Place of English in the school curriculum: time available, textbooks and materials, classroom situation.
- c) Nature of language and language learning; differences between learning one's mother-tongue and learning a second language.
- d) Overview of different methods of teaching: Grammar-Translation, Direct Method, Audio-lingual/Structural Approach, Communicative Approach.

- Unit 3: Presenting New Language P. 35**  
a) Presenting vocabulary: techniques for showing the meaning of words: visual, non-visual; procedure for teaching vocabulary in class; revising and expanding students' vocabulary.  
b) Presenting grammatical structures: techniques for presenting new structures; teaching meaning and form; contrasting structures.
- Unit 4: Oral Practice of Language P. 49**  
a) Stages of practice of new language: controlled and free practice; accuracy and fluency in language practice.  
b) Controlled practice techniques: use of language drills; mechanical and meaningful practice; organising controlled practice in class.  
c) Free practice techniques: communicative practice activities; use of pair work & group work; role of the teacher.  
d) Using dialogues for language practice.  
e) Dealing with errors in oral practice.
- Unit 5: Developing Listening Skills P. 69**  
a) Importance of listening for students of English in Bangladesh.  
b) Training students to listen: focussed listening and casual listening; use of guiding questions.  
c) Types of listening task: e.g. Information transfer; Listen and Do, Listen and Draw; using/adapting textbook for listening practice.  
d) Organising listening activities in class: pre-listening, while listening, post-listening stages (follow-up activities).
- Unit 6: Developing Reading Skills P. 83**  
a) Importance of reading for students of English in Bangladesh.  
b) What is reading? Silent reading and reading aloud.  
c) Using a text for silent reading in class: motivating the students to read; reading for a purpose: the use of guiding questions.  
d) Setting comprehension questions on a reading text.  
e) Other types of reading task: Information transfer (maps, charts, diagrams); True/False Q's; follow-up speaking and writing activities.  
f) Intensive and Extensive reading; dealing with supplementary readers.  
g) Developing sub-skills of reading: skimming, scanning, guessing meaning of unknown words from context.
- Unit 7: Developing Writing Skills P. 98**  
a) Importance of writing for students of English in Bangladesh.  
b) Differences between spoken and written English.  
c) Controlled, guided and free writing.  
d) Types of controlled and guided writing exercise: e.g. copying, writing from a model, picture prompts, gap-filling, writing from notes/tables.  
e) Free writing tasks: letters, essay and composition; preparing students for composition writing  
f) Correcting written work.
- Unit 8: Visual Aids in Language Teaching P. 112**  
a) Importance of visual aids in language teaching.  
b) Kinds of visual aids and their uses: real objects, pictures, textbook pictures, model clock, structure charts, etc.  
c) Using the blackboard; blackboard drawing.

**Unit 9: Teaching Pronunciation****P. 124**

- a) Objectives in teaching pronunciation: what is acceptable?
- b) The English sound system: consonants, vowels and diphthongs; phonemic symbols for English.
- c) Stress, rhythm and intonation; use of weak forms of words in connected speech.
- d) Pronunciation difficulties for Bangladeshi speakers of English.
- e) Teaching techniques.

**Unit 10: Planning one's work****P. 147**

- a) Lesson planning: identifying aims and objectives of a lesson.
- b) Lesson planning: identifying and planning different stages of a lesson.
- c) Lesson planning: providing balance and variety of activities.

**Unit 11: Testing and Evaluation****P. 162**

- a) Importance of testing; formative and summative evaluation.
- b) Types of test: Progress; Achievement;
- c) Testing language elements; testing language skills.
- d) Constructing test items for English.

**PRACTICAL WORK**

- a) Writing of lesson plans and sample schemes of work.
- b) Textbook review.
- c) Preparation of teaching aids: pictures, charts, diagrams.
- d) Micro-teaching.
- e) Evaluating and designing classroom activities.
- f) Constructing test items.

**4. Bibliography (Background reading material)****Classroom Methodology**

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## **APPENDIX 4D**

### **Sample of tasks in Teacher Training (English Elective) manual**

#### **UNIT 2 : GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS IN TEACHING ENGLISH IN BANGLADESH**

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##### **Aims of unit:**

- To ensure that you are aware of the aims and objectives of English teaching in Bangladesh.
  - To ensure that you are aware of the specific circumstances of teaching English in schools in Bangladesh.
  - To acquaint you with the nature of language learning and the relationship between learning a foreign language and a mother tongue.
  - To provide you with an introduction to some of the main approaches to foreign language learning.
- 

##### **INSTRUCTIONS TO TRAINEES**

There are 4 practical activities for you to do, individually or in groups, as indicated in the instructions to each activity. Although answers to some of the activities are given at the end of the unit, please do not look at the answers until after you have completed the activity - **the purpose of these tasks is to help you to learn.**

##### **Introduction to Unit**

1. This unit provides a brief general overview of the nature of language learning processes and some teaching methods which have attempted to make foreign language learning more efficient. More specifically, it looks at the reasons why English is considered to be important in Bangladesh, and the aims and objectives of English teaching in present-day Bangladesh. It also examines the circumstances in which English teaching takes place in Bangladesh.
2. This unit does not provide a complete analysis of the reasons for English teaching and learning in Bangladesh, nor of language learning and teaching processes. It merely sets out some of the main features of the task of English language teachers in general, and those in Bangladesh in particular.

##### **Aims and objectives of English teaching in schools in Bangladesh**

1. Begin by doing Activity 1.

##### **Activity 1**

Working in a small group of 3 or 4, attempt to make a list of the aims and objectives of English teaching in Bangladesh.

(i.e. What are English teachers in Bangladesh trying to do?)

You should discuss this with the rest of the members of your group, and a 'secretary' should make one list for the whole group, on a piece of paper.

You should be prepared to discuss your list with other groups.

\*\*\*\*\*

When you have finished, the 'secretary' of each group should read out the list for his/her group.

You will now examine the aims and objectives of English teaching in Bangladesh, as they are defined in the Ministry of Education syllabus.

2. Begin by examining the difference between an aim and an objective:

- an aim is an overall target; it is expressed in a general manner; it is intended to be achieved in the long term;

*e.g. 'To improve students' ability to communicate fluently in English.'*

- an objective is a particular target on the way to achieving an aim; it is expressed in a specific manner; it is intended to be achieved in the short term.

*e.g. 'To develop students' ability to speak about events in the recent past.'*

Generally speaking, syllabus and textbooks are based on a series of short-term objectives (for each unit, chapter, lesson, etc.), all of which lead towards a long-term aim.

*(Please see the end of this unit for the Aims and Objectives of English teaching in Junior Secondary classes in Bangladesh.)*

3. If teachers are unfamiliar with the aims and objectives of English language teaching, a number of problems are likely to arise:

- Teachers may teach without any aim or objective, except to 'get through the book'.

- Teachers may invent their own aims and objectives, leading to different teachers attempting to do different things; usually, teachers' private objectives are 'to make the students pass the exam', but if the exam does not test according to the aims and objectives of the syllabus, the teachers will not teach and the students will not learn in the way intended by the syllabus.

- If teachers have no clear idea of the way in which the syllabus intends them to teach, they will often teach in the way that they were taught themselves, when they were at school; however, the aims and objectives of English teaching in Bangladesh have greatly changed over the past 50 years, because of changing needs for English (see below).

4. Over the past 50 years, the status of English in Bangladesh has greatly changed. It has moved from the position of a second language prior to 1947, to that of a foreign language in the present. Many people (including many older teachers) still speak English as a second language. This means that they tend to teach English as if it were a second language, but for the vast majority of their students, it is a foreign language. These students need the language in order to speak to people from other countries, rather than to people from their own country (as is the case in India, where English is the only language common to all).

This difference in status between a second language and a foreign language has important implications for the way in which we teach. In particular, when English is taught as a second language, it is usually taught in much the same way as a first language - i.e. English in Britain or the USA. However, foreign-language teaching tends to concentrate on different aspects of the language from native-language teaching. Some of the main differences are:

- Learners of a native or second language usually concentrate on the technical aspects of the language, rather than its skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing), which they already possess. They therefore learn grammatical rules, parts of speech, etc., while learners of a foreign language are in need of the skills of communication.

- Learners of a native or second language usually spend a considerable amount of time studying the literature expressed in the language. In other words, they are interested in the content of what is written, while foreign language learners (unless they have reached a high level of

## APPENDIX 4E

### **Sample: B Ed (English Elective) Final Examination**

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#### **B. Ed. EXAMINATAION, 1998**

#### **ENGLISH (ELECTIVE)**

**Time—3 hours**

**Full marks—60**

*[N.B.—Answer question No. 8 and any FOUR from the rest. All questions are of equal value.]*

1. Why do you think we have English in our secondary school curriculum? Should the teaching processes of a second/foreign language try, as far as possible, to follow the mother-tongue learning processes? Justify your answer.
2. How can you teach a new structure in the class-room? Explain with examples. Give two examples of each of the following structures :—
  - (a) as+adjective+as;
  - (b) Let us+verb;
  - (c) Like+ing form of verb.
3. What are the basic techniques for presenting new words before reading a text? Describe in detail how you would present the following vocabulary :—
  - (i) Paddy;
  - (ii) Parliament;
  - (iii) Intention;
  - (iv) Clever;
  - (v) Meeting.
4. Vividly discuss all the stages of organising listening activities in class. Discuss different listening tasks with examples.
5. How do you define reading? What are the reasons for 'setting the scene' and 'giving guiding questions' before asking the students to read silently?
6. What are the basic features of writing? Can you point out the differences between spoken language and written language? Discuss guided writing elaborately.
7. Transcribe phonetically the following sentences (any four) :—
  - (a) A good teacher is a very important person in any country.
  - (b) He is poor but honest.
  - (c) Where do you come from?
  - (d) Shall we go out to-day?
  - (e) The natural salts of the land are used up when anything is grown.

*/Please turn over*

8. (a) Write a lesson plan on the following passage. Deal with reading and writing activities :—

Masuda Mahmud comes from a village near Rangpur. At secondary school she was an excellent student and did very well in her SSC Examination. Then she studied at the Nurses Training Centre in Rangpur, because she wanted to become a nurse. She is a kind person and very hard working too. During her three years at the training centre she was one of the top student nurses. Then, when she was twenty years old, Masuda went to Dhaka to study for her B. Sc. in nursing at the Medical College Hospital.

(From Book V, English for Today, Unit 2, Lesson 4)

Or,

(b) We rise in early morn  
And plough this earth  
That gives golden grain  
Providing food for mankind  
We watch the tender green plants grow  
For hours together  
And yet feel that we could watch for hours more.

[The Song of the Farmer,  
by Kazi Nazrul Islam (translated  
by Kabir Chowdhury)  
Bk-V English for Today]

## APPENDIX 4F.1

### **Sample: TTC (English Elective) Terminal Examinations**

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**Teachers Training College, Dhaka**

**B. Ed. 1st TERMINAL EXAMINATION, 1997-98**

**ENGLISH**

Time—2 hours

Full marks—20

*[N.B.—Answer any four questions. All questions carry equal marks.]*

1. Describe briefly the Major English Language Teaching Methodologies. Which method do you think is effective in teaching English in the secondary classes? Justify your answer.

2. Briefly explain what you understand by 'visual' and 'verbal' techniques for presenting new words/structures.

How would you present the following?—

(Give all 5 steps)

(a) wise.

(b) enough+noun+for/to (eg. there is enough chocolate for everybody).

(c) a lot of.

3. What is "language practice" and why is it important? Name at least 5 class-room techniques you could use to give oral practise to your students. Explain any one technique in detail (with example) that you could do with your students of class VIII.

4. Why is it important to do oral preparation before giving a writing activity to students? Explain in some detail how you would do oral preparation with your students of class IX for *one* of the following essays :—

(a) Environmental Pollution.

(b) A Road Accident.

(c) The Necessity of Learning English.

5. Transcribe the following sentences :—

(a) Bangla is an easy language to learn.

(b) Sametimes we walk back home.

(c) What time do you go to school?

(d) Father is sleeping upstairs.

(e) Rafiq is going to Chittagong by train.

6. Write short notes on any *two* :—

(a) Pair work ;

(b) Correcting written work ;

(c) Minimal pairs.

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## APPENDIX 4F.2

### **Sample: TTC (English Elective) Terminal Examinations**

**Teachers' Training College, Dhaka**

**B. ED SECOND TERMINAL EXAMINATION, 1997-98**

**ENGLISH (ELECTIVE)**

**Time—2 hours**

**Full marks—20**

*(N.B.—Answer question No. 6 and any three from the rest. All questions carry equal marks.)*

1. Why is it important for the English teacher to speak in English in the classroom? What is focussed listening? Name the different listening tasks you could give your students and explain in detail how you would organise one task for your students of Class VIII.

2. Why do you think the reading skill of your students should be developed? What is the value and purpose of “setting the scene” and giving “guiding questions”, before a reading passage? Explain why skimming and scanning are important for developing the skill of reading.

3. What is the difference between “controlled” and “guided” writing activities? From the list given below describe in some detail an example of each :—

- (a) Writing from Notes;
- (b) Copying (from substitution table);
- (c) Writing from a Model (with pictures).

4. Explain why teaching-aids are important in an English Language Classroom. Discuss the visual aids you could use, and at what stage of your lesson, from the following (any two) :—

- (a) between (vocabulary);
- (b) present perfect tense e.g. I have written a letter;
- (c) as many + noun (structure) e.g. England does not have as many people as Bangladesh;
- (d) comparative degree e.g. Rafiq is taller than Hasan.

5. Write short notes on the following (any two) :—

- (a) follow-up activities;
- (b) eclectic method;
- (c) using the blackboard.

6. Write a lesson-plan on any one of the following :—

**(EFT, BK. 7)**

(a) Fishing in the sea is more difficult than fishing in the river. While the fishermen are gone to sea, the sea may turn rough although it was calm when they left the shore. Most of the fishing boats do not have radios on them. So the fishermen at sea, cannot listen to the weather warning, they cannot return to the shore quickly when the weather turns stormy. They ought to use motor-boats and they ought to have radios with them. A storm may drive the fishing boats very far from the shore. Some boats may also sink. Fishing in the sea, though hard, is challenging.

(b) Active and Passive Voice (Class VIII).

(c) Guided Composition on “Load Shedding”.

## **APPENDIX 6A**

### **Details of observed classes**

1. *Period of Study*: June – September 1995
2. *Location* : Dhaka, Bangladesh
3. *Number of schools in sample*: 14 (see Table 6.1 for site variables)  
(4 belonged to the OTEFL pilot programme, using the new revised book for Class 6)
4. *Duration of lesson*: 40 minutes
5. *Gender-wise distribution of students in schools observed*:

Girls:	3
Boys:	3
Mixed:	8
6. *Number of classes observed*: 43 (6 classes under the OTEFL project)

Class 6:	10
Class 7:	6
Class 8:	8
Class 9:	12
Class 10:	7
7. *Class size*:

Average class:	42 (more on roll)
Largest class:	76
Smallest class:	14 (nearly 70% absent due to bad weather)
8. *Content of Lesson*:

<i>English for Today</i> (course book):	19
<i>New English for Today</i> (Revised):	6 (included in OTEFL pilot scheme)
<i>Rapid Reader</i> :	4 (1 chosen from 8 on offer )
Grammar:	6
Composition:	3
Translation:	4
Reading:	1
9. *Gender-wise distribution of teacher in class observed*:

Female:	22
Male:	21

## **APPENDIX 6B**

### **Teaching materials used in English classes**

#### **1. NCTB designed textbooks & recommended by the curriculum:**

*English for Today (old)* Books 4 - 8

*English for Today (Revised)*, Books 4 & 5, piloted in 30 schools since 1992

8 Supplementary Readers (locally produced): *Four Jewels*, *Love stories*, *Stories from Shakespeare*, *Stories of Jasmine*, etc.

#### **2. Commercially designed grammar, translation & composition books according to prescribed syllabus of NCTB.**

Published every year, authors unknown. Claim to be “thoroughly revised edition” with 98% repeat material but with an inclusion of most recent Board examination questions & mock test papers from schools which enjoy a reputation of “good results” in the SSC.

Among the more popular are 10-12 titles (usually about 4 inches thick). Examples:

*An Upto Date English Grammar, Translation & Composition*

*A Way to English*

*A Novel Approach to Grammar, Translation & Composition*

*Modern Applied Grammar, Translation & Composition*

*A Way to Modern English.*

Some schools devoutly follow an old structural English grammar:

Wren & Martin (first published 1936, recent publication undated). *High School English Grammar & Composition*. New Delhi: S Chand & Co. (Claims to be revised by NDVP Rao, but there are no signs of any revision in principle or in content)

#### **3. Commercially designed & covertly recommended Guides and Notebooks**

Basically exhausting all possible combinations of questions with model answers that are likely to be encountered in the SSC examinations including essays, letters, sentences/passages for translation. Modelled on past questions and a survey of mock tests of reputable city schools. Widely used by teachers in class (and in their private tutoring sessions) during the final year and much earlier at home by students, the assumption being the more you practise the same items over and over again the more chances there are of examinations questions being “common”. “Common question” is a terminology that has evolved in the language (Bengali) to mean “knowing the exact answer to a question because you have learnt it before”—not as a matter of application of knowledge but of pure regurgitation of content.

Popular ones (highly priced, all dauntingly thick containing 300- 400 pages of small print on cheap newsprint paper which crumble with overuse) have interesting titles: *Solar*, *Telegram*, *Neutron*, *Electron*.

Sometimes publishers offer donations to schools in exchange of patronage of these products. Education authorities turn a blind eye to this phenomenon.



## **APPENDIX 6C**

### **Class Observation Schedule**

1. School: state/private \_\_\_\_\_
2. School ethos \_\_\_\_\_
3. Class (6 –10) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Students: Male/female /mixed with average age \_\_\_\_\_
5. Number of students present (out of total) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Teacher: male/female \_\_\_\_\_
7. Any lesson plan \_\_\_\_\_
8. Lesson content: textbook, reader, grammar, composition, translation, transformation, letter writing, essay writing, exam practice, other \_\_\_\_\_
9. Teacher has own teaching material /takes from students \_\_\_\_\_
10. Teacher's proficiency in spoken English: weak/average/good \_\_\_\_\_
11. Ratio of English to L1 used by teacher in lesson \_\_\_\_\_
12. Overall ratio of teacher talk to student talk \_\_\_\_\_

**FIELD NOTES:**

## APPENDIX 6D

### Sample: Classroom Observation field notes and post-observation interview

#### Lesson 8

1. School: state/private private
2. School ethos strict (school has good reputation)
3. Class (6 –10) 9
4. Students: Male/female /mixed with average age mixed (age +15)
5. Number of students present (out of total) 63 (out of 65)
6. Teacher: male/female female
7. Any lesson plan no
8. Lesson content: textbook, reader, grammar, composition, translation, transformation, letter writing, essay writing, exam practice, other textbook
9. Teacher has own teaching material /takes from students yes
10. Teacher's proficiency in spoken English: weak/acceptable /good acceptable
11. Ratio of English to L1 used by teacher in lesson 95: 5
12. Overall ratio of teacher talk to student talk approx 90:10 (not including subversive talk in class by students)

Time : 11:20 –12:00

Topic : 'How to improve our animals' from *English for Today* Book ... (pp 68-70)

[T=teacher. S=student. Ss =students]

The room has large windows down one side and is bright and airy. It is full to capacity. Ss sit in twos on 4 rows of desks stretching to the back. There is some space between the rows but not enough to allow T to get around. There's a table and a chair in front for T. The blackboard behind her is quite large. The walls are bare except for a map of the world.

11:20: Ss greet by rising as T and I enter. I walk quietly to the back and sit on a desk shared by 2 Ss. The Ss have seen me in the school earlier and therefore are not vastly curious. There is some shuffling with desktops opening and closing. T spends about 3 minutes taking the attendance by calling out the roll numbers. She tells them to open their books to page 68. "Open your books to page number 68". She writes the title of the text on the board 'How to improve our animals'. Then she calls on one S at the front to read aloud and sits down at her table. S gets up, goes to the front, faces the class and reads in a loud monotone with T correcting pronunciation of isolated words from time to time (obviously

this is often done in class). Other Ss appear to follow with their heads bowed over their books. It is difficult to say whether it is a new piece of text or whether the Ss have already prepared it at home. She stops the reading and calls on another S to go up and read. In this way she calls on 4, one after another. All of them are from the front part of the class—I have a feeling they are what is known as ‘good’ students. By this time, most of the others have lost interest. The ones at the back have started whispering to each other.

After 10 minutes, the teacher stops the reading and stands up. The class comes to attention. The teacher explains in English what the text is about. She in fact goes into a long explication about animals and how important they are to the country and to people in general (I notice that most of the passages in the book have educational topics). Then she starts a translation in the L1.

At 11: 42, a teacher comes into the class to announce that the sports leave has been sanctioned. There are loud cheers and claps. T tries to reassert control by raising her voice and continues her L1 explanation. The class quietens down but there are pockets of excited whispering going on. During this time she does not ask a single question and the students (except for those reading aloud) have not said anything in terms of the lesson (they have been doing a lot of private talking though). The Ss are getting more and more disinterested as she rambles on. From my vantage point at the back, I can hear one boy softly humming a tune. At the end of her summary (24 minutes into the class), T asks her first question: “What should be done to improve animal stock?”

Have the students heard? I wonder. T does not wait for anyone to give the answer. She gives it herself, repeating slowly twice. Some of the students take the cue and try to write down what the teacher has said, looking at each other’s copies as they try to put down verbatim the T’s words. At the end of that, she asks the class “Is that clear?” And some Ss drone in a sing-song voice “Yes Miss”.

11:50. T reads out 7 comprehension questions from the book (pp 71-72) without mentioning the numbers. She just says “Questions”. I wonder what she wants the class to do – Ss are perhaps well tuned to the dynamics of the class and know exactly what she meant – the speech economy principle working here, I suppose.

Another distraction at this point – some Ss come in and distribute some flyers. There is great interest among those who get a copy, even more interest among those who don’t get one. (I never found out what the flyer contained). The teacher in vain continues reading the questions. Ss are more interested in the contents of the flyers. T raises her voice and repeats the first question. Then picks on one S who stands up and stammers out some inaudible words. The rest of the class erupts into talking – there is quite a buzz. At this point T starts switching back and forth between L1 and English. Has she asked them to do the questions for homework? I don’t understand. I ask the girls sitting next to me what they are supposed to be doing with the questions? They purse their lips and shake their head.

11:55: T asks them to read silently – few comply. 3 minutes later, she says, “Now close your books”. Questions the class “How can a dead cow spread disease”. A boy (again

towards the front) stands up and says, "People drink infected water and get ill". T does not accept that answer. Another S gives the answer verbatim from the book. That is accepted. T clearly signals that SS have to give the exact words from the book (p 69) and only that would be accepted. I notice that when T is speaking to an individual student, she always lowers her voice as if it is a private conversation.

12:00. The bell rings and the class erupts into loud talking, jumping up and moving around even before the teacher or I can get out of the room

Dominant feature: Boredom , inattention.

### **Post- observation Interview : Questions on critical incidents**

1. I: Why did you ask Ss to read aloud?  
T: If Ss read they can get the pronunciation right. Sometimes they mispronounce words.  
I: Only words? (I was hinting at stress and intonation).  
T: Yes if each word is pronounced correctly, s/he can speak well.  
I: What about the other Ss? Do they benefit from this?  
T: Certainly. They listen and learn and they hear me making corrections. The corrections are not only for one student. They are for everybody.  
(I did not press the issue of whether the others were paying attention)
2. I: I noticed you picked on students from the front of the class. Why is that?  
T: Yes that is so. I picked them because they are the brighter ones. They act as a model to the bad ones. If I ask the bad ones to read it's a waste of time. They give bad examples and students don't learn anything. After all Ss don't pay money to come to school to listen to bad models of English.
3. I: Why did you reject the answer given by one student to your question about how a dead cow can spread disease? After all, he was right – he reformulated in his own words what was given in the book and surely that is what we want – that he can handle English.  
T: Yes but our Board exams do not accept own language – they only want exactly what is written in the book. This class is in year 9 now so it is my duty to prepare them very rigidly for the SSC exams.  
I: Perhaps you could have explained that to them.  
T: Oh, Ss know this very well. I should not confuse them by allowing them 2 answers. They have to be clear in their minds about the right way to do things.
4. I: Why did you lower your voice when you spoke to individual Ss?  
T: I must not be seen to give attention to one student only – I have to address the whole class. When I speak to one student, I am neglecting the others, therefore I make it short and quick.

## APPENDIX 6 E

### Questionnaire for trainee-teachers

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING BEFORE DOING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

- a. AGE:    25-35 ☐                      35-45 ☐                      45 + ☐
- b. MALE/FEMALE -----
- c. LOCATION OF SCHOOL -----
- d. CLASS/CLASSES TAUGHT -----
- e. AVERAGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN YOUR CLASS-----
- f. PREVIOUS TEACHER TRAINING:                      YES ☐                      NO ☐
- IF YOU HAVE HAD PREVIOUS TRAINING, PLEASE GIVE DETAILS-----
- h. DID YOU ATTEND ANY NCTB ORIENTATION COURSE FOR  
THE REVISED ENGLISH FOR TODAY BOOKS ?
- YES ☐                      NO ☐
- i. HAVE YOU USED THE NEW ENGLISH FOR TODAY BOOKS (IN  
CLASS 6)                      YES ☐                      NO ☐

=====

This questionnaire gives you a chance to give your personal opinion of English teaching in our secondary schools and of the teacher education programme you are now attending. It has 22 statements. Please read the statements carefully and make your choice.

Please be FRANK and HONEST. Your responses will be treated with complete confidence.

P.T.O.

Please put a tick sign (✓) in the box you select :

		Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Students should frequently be given the opportunity to participate in activities which involve spoken interaction without having to pay too much attention to grammatical accuracy .					
2	Direct instruction in the rules and terminology of grammar is essential to communicate correctly and effectively.					
3	Grammatical correctness is the most important criterion by which language performance can be judged.					
4	The teacher should correct all the grammatical mistakes students make. If errors are made they will result in imperfect learning.					
5	Grammar should be taught as a means to an end and not an end in itself.					
6	Allowing students to take responsibility for their own learning is useless as students are not used to such an idea.					
7	The teacher has to be an <i>authority</i> and <i>instructor</i> in the language classroom.					
8	The role of the teacher in the classroom is to impart knowledge through translation, explanation and giving examples.					
9	Group work allows students to explore problems for themselves and gives them an opportunity to have some control over their own learning. It is thus a valuable strategy for learning.					
10	It is impossible to organise group/pair work in a large class.					

11	Group work activities are essential in providing opportunities for cooperation and in promoting genuine interaction among students.					
12	Group work activities take too long to organise and waste a lot of valuable time.					
13	The teacher cannot monitor what the students are doing during group/pair work and therefore the teacher is not fulfilling his/ her responsibilities.					
14	During group/pair work activities teachers cannot prevent students from using the mother tongue					
15	Teachers' feedback must focus on appropriateness and not on the linguistic and grammatical form of students' responses.					
16	Knowledge of the rules of a language does not guarantee ability to use the language.					
17	As errors are a normal part of the learning process, too much correction is useless.					
18	Language is acquired most effectively when it is used as a vehicle for doing something else and not when it is studied in a direct and explicit way.					
19	The teacher as transmitter of knowledge is only one of the many different roles of the teacher in the language classroom.					
20	Students learn best when taught as a whole class by the teacher. Small group work may sometimes be used to vary the routine but it can never replace sound formal instruction by a competent teacher.					
21	A textbook alone cannot satisfy all the demands of learning a language. The teacher should supplement it with other materials and tasks.					
22	Guide books and notebooks are essential for students of English in our schools.					

## **APPENDIX 6F**

### **Interview schedule for trainee-teachers**

#### **[Format for semi-structured interview]**

- I. Biographical details :**  
Name, school, years of experience, number of classes taught, levels, any previous training.
- II. Setting:**  
School atmosphere, support from the head teacher, relationship with colleagues, learners, the wider community.
- III. Views on Pedagogy:**
  - The use of English and/or the L1 in class
  - Role of the teacher in terms of the kind and amount of teaching done in class and the amount of help offered
  - Responsibilities of learners
  - How materials are used—textbook, grammar, reader.
  - Lesson topics
  - In-class tasks and activities
  - Off-task class control, management
  - Learning assessment checks in class
  - Policy regarding homework
  - The role of examinations
- IV. Feedback from questionnaire findings :** (to clarify attitudinal discrepancies)  
(In addition to several issues already covered in the previous section such as roles of the teacher and the learner among other things)
  - The place and importance of grammar
  - The quality and quantity of error correction
  - Group/pair work
- V. The TTC English programme:**
  - the approach
  - the methodology
  - expectations of training outcomes
  - expectations of transferring training outcomes into classroom teaching
- VI. Any other questions /comments that may arise in the course of the interview**



## **APPENDIX 6G**

### **Sample transcripts: Excerpts from interviews with trainee-teachers**

#### *Excerpt 1*

I: What do you think - should English be retained in the syllabus?

RA: I think it should...since English is an international language.

I: Well ... I mean .... what is its function? Children in school take so much pain over this subject.

R: Presently, those of us who teach English or learn English, we used to think when we were young that one was a good student if one happened to be good at English or at mathematics. One can get various types of jobs and get settled in life.

I: Jobs ...?

RA: Yes, jobs, good jobs, after studying in good subjects and doing well in examinations.

---

#### *Excerpt 2*

I: How should English be learnt?

SB: We have to cultivate it...I mean, cultivation of the language. In our country, we don't speak much English outside our class rooms.

I: And how can we cultivate English .... learn it well?

SB: Cultivation and conversation in English is necessary. So, we need to speak with one another...

I: And in the classroom.... what do we do in the class room? How would you cultivate English?

SB: The areas...those in the rural areas, where we teach English at the school level... I'm afraid English is not cultivated outside classrooms.

I: Then what can we do in class?

SB: The class has only thirty minutes! Textbooks need the whole of this time. We can't do much really...

---

#### *Excerpt 3*

I: To teach English well, how should a teacher teach?

SI: We have only thirty minutes for our class. Our method of teaching....I don't mean the Teachers' Training Method ...is explaining every line of the textbook and providing answers to the questions there.

I: Well, tell me, after a teacher enters the classroom, generally how does she or he teach? Do you think – do you believe that all teachers teach this way, I mean, do most of them teach this way in Bangladesh?

( .. Pause...)

SI: Such a system is followed by almost everybody I think.....

---

Excerpt 4

I: Now, this book *English For To-day* that you are using- what do you think of it?

KH: Well, this new book will be useful for passing the examination, which you know, is the main aim of our students. Besides, if we, I mean, the teachers, apply the techniques for English teaching for which this book has been written then they will be able to communicate...I mean the way they need to do ....

I: Do you then mean that all teachers don't teach according to the instructions given in the book?

KH: No, we don't teach in that way.

I: What do you do?

KH: Well, as I said before, I give the meaning, line by line ...

I: In Bengali?

KH: Yes. I tell the students the meaning, line by line ....then I tell the answers to the questions.

I: You give the answers ! Don't you allow the students to try it themselves?

KH: We ask them first. If someone can answer, well and good. If not we provide the answers.

I: Then what do the students do? Do they note the answers down?

KH: They don't. They have Notebooks. Most of them have Notebooks. I find them buying Notebooks all the time. You know, these notebooks contain answers to questions.

I: These contain the answers?

KH: Yes, the answers are provided.

I: So they... they learn these answers by heart. Does that mean learning?

KH: That .....that .....

I: Yes, can we then say they are learning English?

KH: No, they don't learn English, because they will forget it in no time.

I: Yes ... I'm sure they will.....

KH: It was the same....in our days too. We learnt in the same way, and then we did the examinations....then forgot shortly afterwards.....we forgot everything....

---

Excerpt 5

I: For learning to speak English, what's the role of grammar?

RA: Grammar is needed for correct writing, but is not needed...much, in my opinion, for replies and conversation.

I: Grammar is not needed to communicate - why do you say this? I mean if I want to say that something happened yesterday I would need to know the past tense.....

R: We don't need it for oral communication. Look, when we speak in Bengali, grammar is not needed.....we can all speak in Bengali.

I: Well, in this case, you see, the grammar comes from within ....we have internalised the grammatical system of our mother tongue....

RA: Here, you see, in Moulvi Bazar, there are many "Londoners"<sup>1</sup>—those who can't even sign their names in Bengali but they go to London and after six months of stay there, they

---

<sup>1</sup> This is a reference to the Bangladeshi immigrant community in Britain who originate from one specific region in the north of the country called Sylhet and Moulvi Bazar is in that area. RA belongs to this region.

speak fluent English. While we, here, even after getting a Masters degree, except those who do it in English, are not able to speak much.

I: I see....

RA: That's why I say ...grammar... isn't necessary, the use of English should be enough.

I: So why can't we do this in our schools? We find that communication activities are basically non-existent.

RA: We have only 30 minutes and there are 60 students –how can we do speaking?

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#### Excerpt 6

I: Well students make mistakes ... errors .Do you think, they need to be corrected always?

R: Mistakes in writing. But in speech—they always make mistakes in class ....

I: What's the teacher's role in this?

RA: Generally, the way, I mean the method we follow in teaching - I am excluding the Training College system.....is that we correct the mistakes, as and when these come to our notice.

I: Can the students learn by these corrections alone?

RA: That they don't.

I: You are correcting their mistakes but you think they are not learning

RA: I mean.... not 100% .... Perhaps, they become conscious. Next time their error may be less but they can't be fully correct. And you see, they don't use the language...their performance in English is nil and they don't learn, but only cram for the examination. Thereby, whatever little they learn...learn English, they forget after one year.

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#### Excerpt 7

I: What do you mean by a good student?

RA: One whose result is good is considered a good student.

I: Well, do you mean that one is a good student if one scores high marks only? Do you think, by scoring high in examinations you can be successful in life?

RA: Yes that's true...

I: Yes go on...

RA: Our students aim at passing examinations and scoring good marks.

I: What does a student have to do to get high marks ?

RA: She makes a guess of possible questions that are likely to be asked in the examination and learns answers to these by heart.

I: I see ...

RA: From the type of questions we have in the S.S.C... ours is a High School, a Secondary School, you know. We observe the trend of questions of the preceding 4/5 years. Then, leaving aside the questions of the immediate past year, we go through the questions of the previous 4 years, on the assumption that the likely questions will be from among these, and accordingly teach the answers.

I: Well, do you get the questions that way ?

RA: Yes, more or less. It has been going on like this for a long time. Students prepare for exams in this way. Because of this, as I mentioned earlier, we explain the meanings of the parts of an English text, line by line, according to the questions.

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Excerpt 8

I: Well, then,... how do you look at the role of the teacher? Is it merely imparting knowledge? Do you think, it is a role of only giving them knowledge and education ?

RKD: The guardians too have a responsibility... the society, the environment.... School teachers certainly have the main role.

I: How do you visualise yourself as a teacher? Do you consider yourself an authority, a friend, a facilitator?

RKD: Teachers are like their fathers and mothers. We have to see that they get education. We have to give them knowledge. Teach them virtues...Guardians want us to be very strict and give them tests all the time...

I: And how do you see the students? Do you think they have any say in the lesson?

RKD: Yes, they will have to have some. It has to be seen which method of teaching they accept well. Whatever we teach, they will accept quickly, if they find it interesting and entertaining.

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Excerpt 9

I: Now, let us come to the teacher training course here ...and (pause)... what's your opinion about this training? Do you think this is helping you? When you return to your school and start your teaching again, will it be of much use?

HF: Yes, it will be helpful to me.

I: How will it help?

HF: As I told you earlier, I didn't know these techniques before...Then I did not have a clear idea, as now about pair work as it is given in the book - how it is done and what its utilities are.

I: Well, now when you go back, these.....

HF: I was aware that English is meant to communicate, as an international language, I mean, with the whole world, the world having become so advanced. Without a communicative arrangement, a link with the world,... or as you see, this education, culture, society... human beings are no longer tied at one point. Thus, for higher education or for communicating with foreigners, knowledge of English is certainly necessary, and for that, education in the Training College, I think, has a real importance.

I: Well, do you think, you can apply whatever you are learning here?

HF: It's not possible to apply all these there.

I: In that case, how will you.....

HF: You see, there are problems all around, lack of seats, for instance. It's natural that children will be talking, generally the younger ones. There is a problem in seating and we have so many students! Any one...I mean, naturally we ask a bright student. In a class, for instance, there are 8 or 9 bright students. No doubt, teachers pay special attention to them.

I: This ...do you think, it's the right thing to do: we are attentive to those who are bright, and negligent to those who are ...well, not so bright?

HF: Uh ...We don't neglect them. We ask them too, but they are not very attentive.

I: Why not? Can it be that they are inattentive because of us ...because we as teachers may be at fault?

HF: Those ...(pause)... who can't...I think, their guardians are....not so much.....I mean....conscious. We notice that guardians of students who are good at studies are aware and conscious.

I: Well, then, you mean to say that the background is somewhat important, the family background! Educated parents are somehow more conscious and their children...that means, they have an environment of education at home. Again, at school, teachers seem to give them preferential treatment.

HF: Really it's not always like that. We notice in many cases that parents are illiterate but boys and girls of that environment turn out to be good ... brilliant in studies.

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#### Excerpt 10

I: Well, the training you've had now, do you think, it's sufficient for your whole career, or you may need to have some in-service training as well?

SB: There is a need for occasional in-service training.

I: Why.?

(pause)

I: I mean what we learn to-day may change in many ways in a a few years' time and we may need to update our knowledge....

SB: In keeping with the times...

I: Textbooks will change, the examination system may change, and there are many other things ....

SB: That's it! The examination system changes....again course syllabus also changes. Textbooks change, the techniques change. That's why, I think, again.....at periodic intervals....we need to have in-service- training. We surely need in- service training.

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#### Excerpt 11

I: There is a thing to be noted ....private tuition in English. This has been going on quite strongly.

MSA:Oh yes, very strongly.

I: If students learnt English well in class, private tuition wouldn't be necessary. Suppose I am an English teacher. If I teach English well in class, students wouldn't need further help. If they were having private tuition from me, they wouldn't need me any more as a private tutor. Isn't that a loss for me?

MSA: No, I doubt that. If any teacher works with such a mentality then it's not right. There shouldn't be such a mentality.....Do you really know why students run after English teachers and tuition? You see, with 80 to 90 students in a class, you have more or less 400 to 500 students in 5 classes. And students are quite weak in English right from the lower classes. They can't grasp the lesson that's given to them within the limited sphere of thirty minutes .

I: Then how do they fill this gap ?

MSA: Through tuition .....private tuition.... they approach the teachers for this.

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Excerpt 12

I: The questionnaire that you and the other teacher trainers filled out—I find that most of you have said that you generally favour the communicative approach – you know learner participation ... group work ....learner responsibility.....the teacher's role as varied, not simply a transmitter of knowledge. And yet speaking to you now, it appears there's some mismatch in your beliefs..... Why is that?

JA: Well .... You see the questionnaire statements.... They are like what we read in our course – this is what we should do. But the big question remains .....is this possible? How can I have group and pair work in my class ... I have 80 students. I can only teach from the textbook. I have to finish the syllabus or the head teacher will be very angry, also the guardians. Even the students – especially class 9 and 10, they're very conscious about doing very well in the examination. That is why they not only want to do practice but also go for private tuition in the evenings. Everyone wants to score high marks in the examination. So all this communication cannot be done.

I: So you mean to say that you would like to do it but you can't because of circumstances beyond your control.....Tell me do you really believe in all you are learning here at the TTC.

JA: Well (pause....short laughter) .... It is said trainees take their certificate but leave their knowledge inside the gates of the TTC when they complete their course.

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Excerpt 13

SB: I think, there is some defect in our system because of which we can't make the students learn. We have been trying but have been failing. May be, we are slack. We can't blame the students either: they are young, they will learn whatever you teach them. Students readily accept whatever teachers say. They think highly of teachers, more than they do of their parents. For example, you'll find .....I have noticed, in the course of my teaching in school that a student always asserts ... "This must be right as my madam has said so". Without even thinking for a moment that I (his madam) might have been mistaken.....They accuse their fathers of ignorance and uphold their madam's point of view. That means, they have a respect for their 'Sirs' and 'Madams'. You see, their minds are fresh ... they are impressionable, right? Whatever the teacher teaches them, they pick it up. So, then if they are taught well, their language base will be good automatically. Why shouldn't it be so? In my opinion, they have to be taught the basics much better. So, we as teachers have to know a lot.

I: Do you then think that this training of yours is preparing you for that?

S: I don't think it's enough: this training isn't adequate because a two-year course has been condensed into a ten-month one. This has been causing pressure on us, and...

I: I see!

S: Again, simultaneously ...you see....we have to study other subjects too. I study English here just to pass my exam although the objective might have been to improve myself and to teach well. But I'm not doing that because I need to pass out....get my certificate. If I want to improve my English here, I have to know more and learn more as it is a foreign language. I have to devote more time to English unlike other subjects, as for example, Psychology. Reading things in Bengali, I can understand and cope with my subjects better.

Moreover I think it's not sufficient to cover the course of two years in ten months. We can teach students very well, if we are trained topic wise, separately, as to how to teach on a segregated basis, or on a demonstration basis.

I: So you would like a separate course in teaching English only?

S: That would be useful.

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#### Excerpt 14

S: School teachers...the new entrants.....what you call 'modernisation'....are following the language as presented in the textbook but the teachers who joined earlier, the senior teachers, have been following their own ways. They teach grammar i.e. they lay stress on the traditional system, and don't want to break open the shell of tradition. If you say something different they say it won't work. They constitute a bigger percentage. Till now, they follow that old system, and teach English in that system only...They are the traditional teachers. They passed B.A. over thirty years ago, and joined the school....and have been teaching in the same system ever since. But the new teachers with English degrees, or from other departments, are more open. For instance, the new course conducted by the NCTB ..... we agreed that the professed system was good .... 'oral preparation' and 'practice'. But those who are traditional, they don't agree with this and want us to retain their method. They too need to do courses of the type you mentioned.

I: Well...do you have any conflict in your school, between you, the new teachers, and the older and more experienced ones with 20-30 years experience?

S: Yes, conflict is inevitable...unavoidable because we, after doing BA (Honours) and Masters, prefer to teach the higher classes 9 & 10, rather than 2, 3 & 4: we don't need to take these lower ones. But they don't accept this. The truth is ....they feel, being senior, they know everything and should take the higher classes, and should have priority in every thing. And of course they can get private tuition also which means a lot of money. We teach lower classes so students who are taking the SSC will not come to us although we may be more qualified.....Sometimes one of the senior teachers will ask me, as a junior teacher, to take one of his classes. Burdened with 4/5 classes already I can't and express my inability to do so, and he will remark that in their young days they had taken so many classes while we these days refuse to do so. When they fail to appreciate our workload, we can't help retorting back at times.

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